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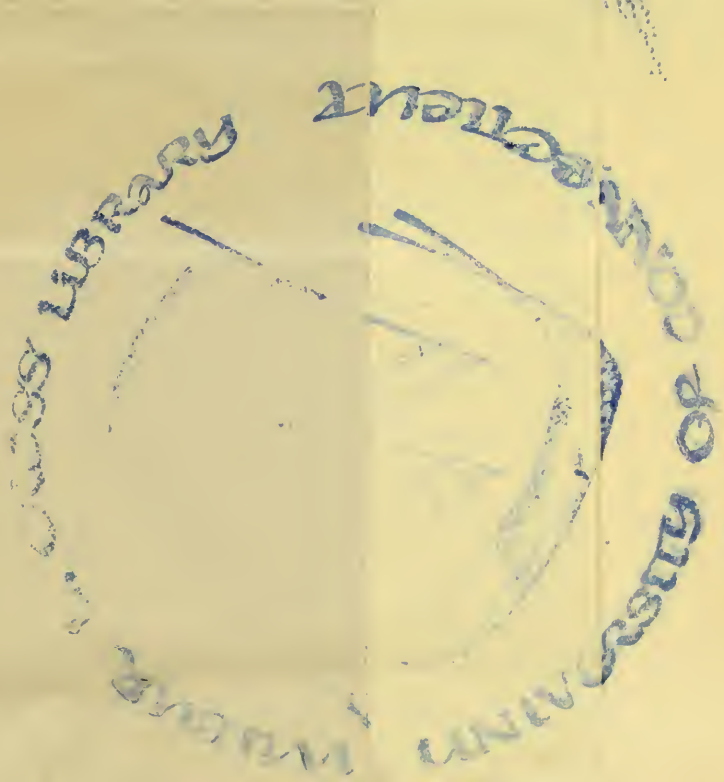

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# SPLENDID MISERY.

## *A NOVEL,*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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By T. S. SURR.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

VOL. III.

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# SPLENDID MISERY.

## CHAP. I.

*An Embarkation.*

THE sudden disappearance of Oceana was occasioned by the following circumstances:—

While she was disrobing herself of her usual attire, and assuming the semblance of a boy, her timid heart palpitated violently. Habited precisely in the same manner as Miss De Camp dressed the character of Julio on the first performance of that Drama, at Drury-lane Theatre, she reclined on

the arm of Lady Julia, and desired her to accompany her into the theatre, which was then lighting up. "Let me first face the empty benches, my dear friend," said she, "and try if I can keep my eyes open. Most fortunate indeed it is, that I shall not have occasion to open my mouth, for speak I could not positively. I know not what makes me such a coward, but if it were *possible* I would even now decline appearing.

They entered the elegant little theatre. Among a number of persons who were on the stage, Lady Julia pointed to the representative of the venerable De l' Epee. "How admirably young Meriton has copied Kemble," said her Ladyship. "I verily believe he has borrowed his dress. But how, in the name of wonder, has he contrived to paint his face so like him? Actually 'tis a mask."

The

The representative of De l' Epee now approached them, and tapping Oceana on the shoulder, pointed with his finger to the boxes, pit, and gallery, and intimated by signs the universal applause she would receive. Oceana understood the encouraging compliment, and *courtesied*. The forgetfulness of her apparent sex excited a laugh from the scene-shifter, musicians, and others who were present, among whom was the Duchess of Derrington.

" Oh fie—oh fie, child," said her Grace. " For Heaven's sake, go and rehearse a quarter of an hour in the Green Room, and recollect what character you represent. Take her under tuition, benevolent teacher of the Deaf and Dumb." Then turning to Lady Julia, " Where is the Marquis?" cried her Grace. " Come, child, it is time every one was dressed.

Her Grace and Lady Julia, De l' Epee and his pupil, then quitted the stage at opposite wings.

In a quarter of an hour afterwards the whole party at the villa were thrown into a state of astonishment and alarm, by the appearance of young Meriton, in precisely the same dress as the other De l' Epee, but without a mask.

"Why have you taken off the mask, Meriton?" said her Grace. "It looked infinitely better than that blotch of paint."

"Mask! What mask does your Grace allude to?"

This question led to the discovery, that the De l' Epee, to whom the Duchess had entrusted Oceana, was an impostor.

impostor. 'Twas then the alarm was instantly given, but it was then too late.

The dumb resemblance of De l'Epee had imperceptibly drawn Oceana from the Green Room to the back part of the stage, which was totally dark, where, taking her by surprise, he fastened a handkerchief in her mouth, in such a manner as prevented a sound from escaping her lips, and thus in his arms conveyed her through a back door into the garden, and from thence to the avenue, where the two men, his assistants, were in waiting.

Terror had actually deprived her of sense, and when she was delivered to the two men, she was apparently lifeless.

In this state she was conveyed to a boat, into which the pretended De l' Epee followed, and the men instantly rowed down the river.

It

It was a dark cold night; the wind blew tempestuously, and the tide ran strongly against them.

The moment that the boat floated, the disguised commander of this horrid expedition applied himself with activity to the restoration of his victim. He had provided some blankets, and a large box-coat, with which he sheltered her from the inclemency of the evening, and having removed the gag, endeavoured to force some wine into her mouth.—The watermen he encouraged to exertion by promises of increased reward, and stimulated them still further by large draughts of brandy. They had nearly reached Battersea-bridge, ere Oceana discovered any symptom of returning to life. She at length sighed heavily, and raised her head. The darkness of the night prevented her seeing any objects, except

except the lights upon the bridge, which were reflected on the agitated water: and the dreary silence was only interrupted by the howling of the wind, and the monotonous and melancholy sound of the dashing of the oars. Surprise at this scene was soon followed by the painful recollection of the reality of her situation. She lay at the bottom of the boat, and her hands were confined by being muffled in the arms of the large box-coat. In a voice scarcely audible she ventured to utter—"Where am I—where am I? Who are you—what are you going to do with me?"—In vain she spoke; no answer was made to her pathetic enquiries. She attempted to extricate her hands from their confinement. The unknown instantly prevented her, and by signs gave her to understand she must submit unresistingly, and without a word, or instantly

ly die. At the same moment he drew a pistol from a side-pocket of his great coat. She felt the inefficacy of resistance, and yielded herself to her fate.

As the first impressions of alarm subsided, conjecture upon conjecture crouded on her mind, concerning the authors of this horrid stratagem, which in a moment had severed her from every object that was dear to her.—That it was some agent of Lord Latimore was the most probable idea. The dread, nay horror, which he had expressed at her discovery of his misery of mind, plainly told how much he feared the consequences of her knowledge.—No other supposition, therefore, could she form than, that the wretched Latimore had determined to prevent the possibility of being himself exposed, by causing her assassination.

sassination. Under this dreadful apprehension she was compelled to remain silent and unresisting.

As soon as they came in sight of Westminster-bridge, the men at the oars ceased rowing, and assisted their commander to replace the gag in the mouth of Oceana, and to bind a fillet round her eyes. They then made for the shore, moored the boat at the stairs, where it had been hired, and conveyed their victim, muffled up in the box-coat, on land.

It was then past midnight. The wind had abated, but it was still totally dark, and the rain descended in torrents. Not a human being was in the streets through which they passed. At length they stopped in the road, near Astley's Riding School, where a coach and four was in wait-

ing. Oceana was placed in the coach; her unknown keeper seated himself by her side, and the two assistant ruffians occupied the back seat. Without the utterance of a single word, the carriage drove off at full speed: the gag was then removed from the mouth and the fillet from the eyes of the suffering Oceana.

From the frequent turnings of the carriage, Oceana very justly concluded that they were travelling through cross roads for the purpose of eluding pursuit. They stopped twice to change horses before the first light of morning began to render objects dimly visible. By the direction of the disappearing gloom, she concluded that they were travelling westward. Nothing, however, that she could discern afforded her the least knowledge of what part of the country she was in.

in. A barren heath was before her, which seemed only to terminate in the horizon. Not a single habitation, not a living animal of any species was to be seen. Withdrawing her tearful eyes in despair from so dreary a view, they fell on the faces of the ruffians who sat opposite to her. Callous to all sense of human feelings, in the very act of such an outrage against humanity, the villains were asleep.—The brutality of their hearts was legible in their horrid visages; more desperately wicked countenances were never worn by men. They were dressed in blue jackets and trowsers, smeared with pitch; the hair on their heads was clotted and ragged, and hung in filthy locks over their eye-brows. The mind of Oceana, which during the night had almost settled itself into a tranquil resignation to die, considering herself at the disposal of an all-

powerful

powerful and beneficent Being, without whose notice "a sparrow falls not to the ground," now actually revolted with horror at the idea of perishing by such executioners.

Turning from these wretches she glanced her eyes on their commander, who, she doubted not, was Lord Latimore himself. He was still masked, but the uneasiness of his mind was sufficiently demonstrated by loud and frequent sighs.

As the light of morning grew stronger he repeatedly let down the glass, and seemed to cast an expecting look towards the boundary of the heath.

Oceana directed an anxious eye towards the same spot. She at length saw, at a considerable distance, an object, which appeared like the spire of a church-

a church-steeple. The unknown saw it at the same moment, and instantly aroused the sleeping sailors, and pointed to the object.

The fellows rubbed their eyes, and seemed to prepare themselves for the execution of some part of their instructions connected with the appearance of this object.

Oceana did not remain much longer in doubt. The object which she had mistaken for a church spire, upon a nearer view, she plainly perceived to be the top-mast of a vessel. At once she saw her destiny.

The carriage stopped. Oceana and her companions alighted. She was still muffled up in the box-coat, and from an impulse of delicacy, amidst all her

her terrors, she shrunk at the sight of her male attire.

The chief villain committed her to the care of the sailors, and ordered them to walk forward, while he gave money and directions to the post-boys, who immediately set off at full speed on their return. He then joined the sailors, and they continued walking in a direction towards the top-mast of the vessel, which remained constantly in sight, and having reached the extremity of the heath, by turning abruptly to the left, the ocean burst upon their view, and the whole of the ship became visible at the mouth of a long creek.

On arriving at this spot the two sailors stopped; each drew a whistle from his jacket, and sounded some peculiar notes,

notes, which served as signals to the persons in the vessel, as well as to some others on shore. The answer from the former was the hauling down a flag, and from the latter a single report from a pistol. In a few moments the galloping of horses was heard, and soon afterwards two men, of a similar appearance to the sailors, with four horses, arrived on the edge of the creek.

In the mean time the crew of the vessel were busily employed in heaving the anchor, and unfurling the sails. Oceana, scarcely sensible of what passed around her, was placed before one of the men on horseback. The commander himself was also compelled to make use of a similar mode of conveyance, whilst the two sailors mounted the other horses.

These

These men were Flemish smugglers, who brought spirits from Dunkirk to this and other solitary parts of the British islands, where they deposited in caves and holes their contraband goods, which, as opportunity served, were removed by the English dealers in this illicit traffick, to their own depositories.

Perhaps to any other than these people, a landing from this creek was wholly impracticable, and they themselves only accomplished it by the spirit and sagacity of their horses, who would now leap over wide morasses, and now swim over large arms of the creek, till they gained a neck of land, which could be approached by boats from the ship which conveyed them on board.

The distracted Oceana was conduct-

ed

ed to a cabin, where, in solitude, she gave vent to feelings of despair, as her floating prison bounded o'er the foaming deep, and left at an invisible distance the island which contained every source of her hopes.

CHAP.

## CHAP. II.

### *Charitable Surmises.*

NEVER in the most flourishing age of chivalry was there a virtuous and valiant knight whose heart beat higher in the cause of injured innocence, than did that of the Marquis of Leverton, when, with a soul all zeal, he bounded from the presence of the agonized father of his Oceana, resolutely fixed to risk his life in restoring her to his protection.

The pure instinct of that universal benevolence which warmed his heart, would

would have prompted him to his undertaking had there been no more powerful motive; but in this instance, the object, whose distress claimed his interference, was the newly-found offspring of his more than father, and was the idol of his own heart—the being whom, by a most powerful operation of the mind, he contemplated as the source of supreme happiness, and distinct from whom there seemed to Leverton neither grace nor good in any part of the vast system of creation.

Impelled to the pursuit by such strong and combined motives, had the success of his enterprise depended upon speed or prowess, the force and purity of his zeal would doubtless have commanded triumph. Unfortunately, however, when breathless with

with running he arrived at the river, he found no hostile defender to challenge his bold arm, nor fugitive spoiler to urge his flying feet. Only one solitary being was to be seen; a rough old fisherman, who was fastening his boat to the side of his little hut, and calling to his wife for lights. The marquis, with very little ceremony, interrogated him, but received no sort of information, excepting that the tide *was strong up*, and that with such a *squall* he did not suppose a boat would *venture down*.

"Will you then instantly put off with me up the river? Can you obtain any assistance? Any sum of money you name is at your service."

Ere the old fisherman could reply to the

the questions of the Marquis, his wife appeared and answered for him in the negative :—

"Her old man had over-worked himself as it was; their 'prentice was sick in bed, and he had been out all day drenched in the rain. She had a good hot supper waiting for him, and he should not go to *knock himself up* for all the gold in Christendom. There's Will Hardy, lives at that house on the other side of the causeway, where you see the light in the window, and perhaps he—"

"Oh, less words, less words," cried the Marquis, in no very gentle accent, and leaving the old housewife to the enjoyment of her supper, ran and knocked loudly at the door of Will Hardy.—Here he was instantly successful,

cessful, but before the athletic Hardy had procured an assistant, and got his boat in readiness, Lord William Derrington and Captain Melville, with several servants, bearing flambeaux, joined the Marquis.

"Noble and benevolent Leverton," exclaimed Lord William, "I honour a heart like yours, but you exhaust your energies in vain. I have a swifter and surer method of recovering our Oceana than pursuit. We must get the commander of this infamous outrage in our power, and his agents will fall of course."

"Have you then discovered the perpetrator of this horrid outrage?" said the Marquis.

"We think we have," said Lord William,

William, " but a few hours will end all doubt. I have ordered a carriage: we: must instantly set off to town. Will you acompany us?"

" To the world's end, my Lord, in a cause like this."

They immediately returned to the villa. The disappearance of Oceana had entirely changed the appearance of the house, the hostess and her guests. Carriage after carriage had rolled away from the lodge-gate with disappointed visitors. The brilliant light and merry bustle of the theatre were converted into a dark and gloomy silence. The performers had thrown off their theatrical dresses, and apprehension, amazement and disappointment were pictured in every countenance.

Conjecture

Conjecture was exhausted to account for the appearance of the fictitious De l'Epee. Every servant was questioned and cross-examined, but such had been the bustle and confusion of preparation for the play, that any one might have passed and repassed, in all directions of the house, without molestation or even notice.

When the real and supposed fathers of the lost Oceana returned, every one, in some way or other, offered condolence to the Captain; for the discovery that she was the daughter of Lord William was confined to the Marquis.

The Duchess of Derrington was sure it must prove a *hoax*; and even went so far in her conjecture as to declare her persuasion, that it was a trick of Mrs.

Mrs. Morley to be revenged on her Grace for not asking her to the fête.—Lady Lustre, who was one of the dinner party, confirmed the opinion of the Duchess, as indeed, she would have done, had it been diametrically opposite.

"Oh, it's quite impossible to be otherwise, dear Captain Melville," said her Ladyship. "I would not fret at all about it, I assure you. To be sure it's a very spiteful thing in her, but she does more shockingly mischievous things every day. I'll tell you how she served a Lady of my acquaintance, who is monstrously terrified at ghosts. She lived at Twickenham, and Mrs. Morley—"

"D—n Mrs. Morley," said the Captain. "I beg your Grace's pardon. But at this very moment, perhaps, my dear child perishes. Isn't the carriage ready, my Lord?"

"We wait for the Marquis, he is changing his theatrical dress," said Lord Derrington.

At that moment he entered the room, and bowing, merely said, "I am ready."

"Is the Marquis of Leverton quitting his mother's house without condescending to say one word on the subject of his departure," said the Duchess in a tone of haughty anger.

"Your Grace, I'm sure, will pardon an unintentional appearance of disrespect,"

spect," said the Marquis. "My heart, my soul is interested at this moment in one only object, and until I am sure of Miss Melville's safety, I have neither eyes nor ears for any other subject.—Come, Captain Melville; come, my Lord."

"I insist, sir," said her Grace, reddening with rage; "I insist, sir, that you recollect Lady Julia Latimore is in this room."

"Oh no, no, no," exclaimed the amiable Julia, her beautiful eyes filled with tears, "think of nothing now, my Lord, but the restoration of my dear friend to her father. Oh do not lose a moment—pray stay not to reply."

The Marquis bowed, and in com-

pany with Captain Melville and Lord Derrington, instantly left the room.

"There seems a prodigious bustle about this young lady," said Lady Lustre. "To be sure it's vastly natural for the old sea-gentleman, what's his name, to fret and fume, and all that sort of thing; but I don't exactly see why the Marquis of Leverton should neglect Lady Julia to run nobody knows where, after nobody knows who, and for nobody knows what. And then, you know, my dear Duchess, why should Lord William, who one would imagine had enough else to do with state-papers, and dispatches, and negociations, *and that kind of article;* I say, I don't exactly comprehend why he should join in this blind chace after a person, as I am told, of no very high consideration. I beg par-

don,

don, my dear ladies, she is your particular friend; but certainly, as every body says, there is a sort of mystery in the affair. I remember at your Grace's charming concert Lord William, and a stranger, one of the most queer sort of creatures in the world, were nodding, and plotting, and contriving some clandestine scheme about this Miss—— I forget her name. Now if your Grace had not struck out the idea of odious Mrs. Morley, I should have absolutely set it down, that to-night's adventure was a concerted thing. And indeed it seems unaccountable how any one could be carried off among so many people against their own will."

Lady Julia had removed to another part of the room to converse with the Bishop, who was present, and thus lost this

this specimen of fashionable volubility, and charitable judgment. Lady Amelia, however, was an auditor, and at this part of her Ladyship's harangue interrupted her, with a severe reproof for such an insinuation.

The Duchess, who had only restrained an ebullition of rage at the conduct of the Marquis, by biting her under lip till it smarted with pain, could master it no longer. The hint of Lady Lustre was an electric spark on the embers of jealousy, which the conduct of the Marquis had kindled, and it now blazed forth into a flame. She burst into tears, exclaiming between her sobs—"It's excellent,—it's excellent indeed. Lady Lustre, you are right; I am persuaded you are right. I am duped, cheated, insulted, outraged."

Lady

Lady Mary Derrington attempted to console her enraged mother, but unfortunately every word she uttered added fuel to the flame, as it was dictated by a spirit of malice against the calumniated Oceana, and tended to confirm the dread of the Duchess, that her son, in concert with his uncle, and Captain Melville, had actually planned the clandestine retreat of Oceana, with a view to marry her.

Improbable and absurd as such a supposition must have appeared to her Grace in a calm and rational moment, in the existing state of her mind it appeared the most, nay, the only probable conjecture she could form. This idea was strengthened by a variety of little attentions to Oceana, which Lady Lustre and Lady Mary alternately recollected and repeated; and it was established beyond doubt by

by the stress which was laid upon the abrupt departure of the Marquis for Salt-hill, and the unexpected and otherwise unaccountable appearance of Lord William as his companion, when he returned.

The closetted interview of Lord William and Captain Melville was not forgotten by Lady Mary, nor any other circumstance that could increase the conviction of her Grace as to the delinquency of her son, and the artful disappearance of Oceana. In vain Lady Amelia Latimore rebutted argument with argument, and fact with fact. The pride, the anger, the revenge of the Duchess were all excited to an ungovernable point, and she became almost frantic.

The excellent Bishop and his sisters now

now jointly remonstrated and entreated with equally unavailing effect, until at length, with much moderation of temper, the noble ecclesiastic took each of his sisters by the hand and withdrew.

In the lobby they passed the body of the Duke of Derrington in a state of intoxicated insensibility, borne by two servants, who were conveying it to a chamber. The Reverend Mr. Knowles was candle bearer on the occasion, having had the *honourable* triumph of seeing the Duke under the table at the conclusion of the third *extra* bottle after the rest of the company had retired from their bacchanalian orgies.

"Julia, Amelia," said the Bishop, pressing the hand of each, "Do not

your hearts ache at such scenes? —Could the poorest sons and daughters of labour become inmates of this villa, and spectators of these scenes of brutalized nonentity, and self-created vexation, would they not exclaim even on the owners of a palace, "Poor Duke and Duchess of Derrington!"

The carriage was announced, and the Bishop and his sisters left the villa for Berkley-square.

## CHAP. III.

*Change of Ministers.*

DURING the ride of Lord Derrington and his companions, from Richmond to London, the most unreserved communication of all the past events, in which Oceana was concerned, took place, connected with conjectures of her present destination.

Captain Melville related, among other things, the sleep-walking scene in the library at Latimore-House, and instantly Lord William connected with this

this incident the story of Mortimer's assassination at the House in the Wood. The secret pangs of conscience, the unseen misery of the heart of Latimore was thus accurately traced to his intended, and imagined murder of the excellent Mortimer.

It had been previously arranged, that they should drive first to the house of Lord William, in Downing-street, where Mortimer resided under the title and disguise of Father Spallanzani, an Italian ecclesiastic.

Here they accordingly alighted, and Lord William immediately desired the attendance of Father Spallanzani. Instead of the pretended ecclesiastic, Mr. Smithson, his Lordship's private secretary, entered the apartment, and with anxiety strongly pictured in his

his countenance, begged a private audience.

"Speak to me as if I were alone, Smithson, if myself am concerned; if it is official business, my friends will excuse."

"You are no longer, my Lord, in office. The Earl of Latimore's party are completely triumphant. The secrecy of their combined operations is marvellous. The Duke of ——— himself, whom they have placed at the head of the new set, was unapprised of the change six hours ago. It is not three hours since he was here with the royal message, demanding your Lordship's resignation. I instantly dispatched couriers to Salt-Hill, and from thence to Richmond."

"They

"They shall have my resignation, Smithson," said Lord William, with an energy of expression; "they may keep the honours and the toils of office to themselves, but they shall not keep my daughter. You may well start, Smithson, but be not alarmed. My intellects are not injured by *your intelligence. That* does not affect my heart. But I have this very day discovered that I had a living daughter, and at the very moment, when I was flying to fold her in my arms, at that instant she was carried off, by violence, from the Duchess of Derrington's. Till I recover her, nations, nay, the whole world besides, cannot excite a moment's interest in my bosom. Where is Father Spallanzani?"

"There again, my Lord, your enemies have wounded you," replied Smithson.

Smithson. "About an hour since, the new raised creature of Lord Latimore, Elmer, who is appointed Under Secretary of State to the Duke of ——— called here, and demanded an interview with Father Spallanzani. They were together about ten minutes, and the result of their intercourse was an order to Spallanzani, as an alien, to quit London instantly, and the kingdom within two days. In great agony the good father wrote this letter for your Lordship, and instantly left the house."

Lord William tore open the letter, and beckoning his secretary to retire, read it aloud.

"Oh, noble friend, what a marvellous destiny is your Mortimer's! Your Secretary will inform you, why I fly

I fly from your roof without seeing you. As soon as I have determined where I shall conceal myself, I will contrive to inform you. Quit England, I will not—I cannot; for if my eyes, my ears, my heart do not conspire to cheat my imagination, I have this day discovered—a child—a long lost son. To appeal against the order for my leaving the kingdom, would necessarily compel me to disclose who I am. This I cannot do. The new train of events, as well as my pledged honour, render that step at present, impossible. Pardon this scrawl; my agitation at the discovery of a lost child, from whom, the moment I discover him, I am torn away, if your Lordship could imagine its force, would be ample apology.—Adieu!

"MORTIMER."

"If

"If I could imagine its force!" exclaimed Lord William. "Poor Mortimer, little did we dream, that on the same day I should find a daughter, and yourself a son. I find—distraction—no, I have lost her, perhaps for ever! Why do I thus loiter—why bestow a moment's thought upon the puppets or machinery of politics, the cold contrivances of art and cunning, while Nature's warmest, noblest impulse prompts to action. Gratitude as well as duty compel my personal attendance, to surrender into the hands of the best of Sovereigns the trust which he is pleased to withdraw. That done, my dear Leverton, and my worthy Melville, we will attack the villain, Latimore, with such weapons, as even his hypocrisy and obduracy shall be unable to with stand.

The

The event proved otherwise.

Lord Latimore refused to see either Lord William or the Marquis of Leverton. Captain Melville however was admitted, and to him the Earl expressed such strong symptoms of surprise and horror at the transaction, as described by the supposed father of Oceana, that the ingenuous Melville was fully persuaded of his innocence, and even the belief of Lord William himself was staggered. Until the re-appearance of Mortimer, therefore, it was agreed, that no further discovery of the real stories of Oceana or of Mortimer should be made to the world, or to Lord Latimore; but that at present he should be left to the enjoyment of his supposed triumph, while the three friends should use every possible means for the recovery of the object of their united affections.

CHAP.

## CHAP. IV.

*Levee of a Woman of Fashion.*

"WHY am I thus doomed to Misery? Why am I thus perpetually marked out the prey of disappointment, and the sport of mortification? Is there a wish I ever form, but it mocks me? Is there a scheme I ever plan, which some dæmon does not defeat? Nay, even in the very gratification of my desires I am disappointed and tormented. I discover objects which at a distance tempt my grasp:— I fly to them on magic wings, for which I barter

I barter every consideration of prudence:—my pursuit is aided by riches, by reputation, by flattery, but no sooner am I within reach of the objects for which I have panted, than they either vanish into non-entities, or assume some altered and odious form, and instead of affording me the happiness I anticipated, bring the blush of folly on my cheek, or enervate my soul with *ennui.* I am certainly the most miserable creature in existence!!"

Such was the soliloquy of a woman whose splendid establishment and external deportment daily created a thousand little imps, the brood of envy, who busily employed themselves, in all the various crevices of female temper and disposition to which they could find an avenue. Such was the inward retrospection of the Duchess of Derrington,

rington, as she was seated at her morning toilette, under the trembling hands of Howard, her woman, whose endeavours to make her Grace pleased with her own appearance were entirely fruitless; for as was the mind, so was the person of this votary of adulation absolutely sacrificed at the shrine of fashion. Her form was elegantly beautiful; her face was marked by Nature with the choicest ornaments of grace and loveliness. Yet scarcely a vestige of her workmanship was discernible through the disguise of fashion. The wavy flaxen locks that shaded her eyebrows, were no gifts of nature, but would for the same price have been placed by Mr. Friseur Ross upon the temples of her Grace's waiting-maid. Her ears and elbows, which Nature had covered with a skin delicate and fair as virgin wax, fashion decreed should wear rosy dye, and emulate

emulate the tints upon her cheeks and lips.

Hours of every morning were therefore occupied in devotions at a full-length mirror : there would she practise with the indefatigable industry of an actress, zealous for the mead of public applause, endless variations of attitude and countenance, as well as of dress.

At this time no dress was deemed becoming ; no attitude fascinating; no character of countenance agreeable, or even tolerable.

Howard had frequently seen her Grace out of humour, pettish, and even angry, but till after the disappearance of Oceana she had never beheld her sad.

The

The sudden and mysterious disappearance of Miss Melville, in merely frustrating her plans for the entertainment of an evening, would have been a deep source of mortification to her Grace:—but it was now the cause of more important griefs. The incident had drawn from the lips of the Marquis, her son, the declaration of such a preference for Oceana as precluded the possibility of any chance to her Grace, of the accomplishment of her long-formed project of marrying him into the Latimore family. Nay, the open rupture between the Earl of Latimore and Lord William, seemed to erect an eternal barrier between the two illustrious houses, whilst the triumph of the Latimores at court threw a shade on the splendour of her own house, that chilled the spirits even of a Duchess of Derrington.

Floating

Floating on bubbles of pleasure in the regions of Fashionable Follies from her birth, this votary of Fashion was a stranger to those joys of the heart, which are found in the tranquil walks of domestic life. A wife and a mother in name alone, the conjugal and parental feelings were ingulphed in one preponderating passion for adulation and *eclat*, which perpetually dazzling her imagination by its false lustre, still left her heart a cold and dreary void.

Hitherto indeed the "misery" of the Duchess had been chiefly a "negative happiness." It had proceeded from the incompetency of the pleasures pursued to yield lasting satisfaction.—She was now, however, about to experience positive "misery" from the

the want of means to carry on a pursuit, which she had hitherto deemed necessary to existence.

Forebodings of this evil hour had arisen from some expressions of the Duke on the rupture of the matrimonial treaty, which "left no plausible pretence for an application to his heir to join in the disposal of an entailed estate," for the replenishment of those coffers, which, however well supplied, the extravagances of her Grace's style of living had repeatedly exhausted.

Thus with the mental exclamation beforementioned, "*I am certainly the most miserable creature in existence,*" the object of universal envy and admiration descended from her toilette to an apartment in her town residence, distinguished as the Du-

chess's *Breakfast-room*; though her Grace never entered it till high noon, where she was constantly attended by a train of human insects ever ready to flutter in the bright beams of a sun of splendour.

This room, or rather suit of rooms, had been recently decorated and furnished *a la Egyptienne*. On the ceilings and pannels sphinxes and centaurs kept stately watch. Sophas and chairs, much too splendid for the purposes of comfort, by the gilded emblems carved on their frames, seemed designed as monuments of Nelson's Victory on the Nile. Balcony windows were crouded with the produce of hot houses, and the orange-tree and myrtle bloomed at your elbow in all the luxuriance of summer, while your cheek was scorched by the emission of heat from a winter's coal-fire.

To

To the novice of fashion such a scene of splendour would have been irksome, but the ease or effrontery of those who visited this temple of magnificent prodigality, made them *ever at home*. A sort of elegant disorder in these apartments marked their use and the taste of their general occupants. On a green satin cushion, with gold border, taken from one of the chairs, and placed on a table, reclined at her perfect ease the little French dog, Sappho, while Monsieur L'Abbé, lolling on the sofa, in his morning gown, was sharing a cup of frothed chocolate and a rusk with Sappho. One chair was laden with music; another with books. French novels, German plays, Political, Theological, Œconomical, Agricultural, and Statistical Pamphlets, were indiscriminately scattered about the room.

Here Peter Pindar and Hannah More were frequently discovered tête-á-tête in a corner; Locke on the Human Understanding, and Count Rumford on cooking Potatoes, would jointly occupy the place of flowers on a tripod; and the transparent *Fashions of London and Paris* would be found not unaptly interleaved in *Les Etudes de la Nature*.

Newspapers and Play-bills, New Songs, and Notices of Charity Sermons, generally covered the top of a grand Pianoforte; and an Indian shawl perfumed with Otto of Roses, was generally to be removed when Lady Mary was *entreated* to touch the harp.

The entrance of her Grace into these apartments was the usual signal for the

the porter to admit such visitors as were always *at home* at Derrington House.

Her Grace had scarcely exchanged the morning salutations with her daughter, when her Levee commenced by the appearance of Lady Lustre, whose volubility had lately become useful in driving away *ennui* from the Derrington. Immediately after her Ladyship followed Lord Yawnley, and his shade Tom Pliant. Taking off an enormous spencer, and languidly dropping it, with his hat and stick, upon one of the Egyptian sofas, with an affected gape his Lordship seated himself opposite the Duchess, and twice yawning exclaimed, "My G—d, how backward those orange-trees are!" "Backward!" said Lady Lustre, "bless me, how can you be so ignorant? They are in full bearing all the year round."

round." "O dear me, right, right. I forgot, I declare. But pray how does that lovely creature do—that Miss Melville whom I saw somewhere with your Grace, I forget where?" "Lord bless me, Lord Yawnley," said Lady Mary Derrington, "you know how she is off nobody knows where." "Oh true; I had positively forgot. I do forget strangely; don't I, Tom?" "Upon my soul, you do," replied Pliant.

His Lordship now yawned three times, and then turning to his friend—"Wasn't there something I had to say to her Grace, eh, Tom?" "About the old Captain your tenant." "Oh true. Let me see, it was to beg the favour of your Grace to speak to the Minister in his behalf; what was it about Tom, eh?"

"Oh don't encumber your memo-

ry

ry unnecessarily, dear Lord Yawnley," said her Grace, with a forced smile. "You forget Lord William is no longer minister."

"Oh my shocking memory. Ten thousand pardons. I'm quite sorry I mentioned it: it looks so like an affront. Don't let it mortify you. Who have they made minister now?"

"How absurd, Lord Yawnley; you know it is the Earl of Latimore," said her Grace.

"Lati—Latimore; yes, I'm sure I've heard the name, but I forget where. Pray do you know him? Was not he at the siege of Acre? But don't tell me; I shall be too late for Tattersall's. Will you order the curricle, Tom?"

"We

"We walked, my Lord."

"Oh, true, I sent the fellow on to Tattersall's, didn't I? I declare I forget."

"What an unfortunate memory!" said the Duchess. "You were never on a trial, I hope."

"Upon my word I don't remember. Was I, Tom? Well, good—what is it, afternoon or morning? Oh, true I wish your Highness a good morning."

"Your Grace, my Lord, you mean," said Pliant.

"There again now, I positively thought I was quitting Brandenburgh House, and mistook your Grace for the Margravine; but in an Egyptian room,

room, you know, Egyptian disorders of the sight are excusable, or my bad memory would have been corrected by the object I am gazing at. Excuse my failing.—Come, Tom, bring my spencer. I say, your Grace, excuse my failing."

"Oh, I shall copy it, my Lord," said the Duchess, "and in one minute forget there is a Yawnley in existence."

"Don't you *forget that*, my Lord," said Lady Lustre, with a smile of malicious delight.

"Of all the absurdities that folly ever invented for the votaries of notoriety," said the Duchess, after Lord Yawnley had withdrawn, "surely this affectation of short memory is the most ridiculous."

"And for that reason certainly best adapted for the purpose," said Lady Mary. "Wearing eye-glasses or green spectacles, is no longer singularity, and of course there is no notoriety in short sight. In the same manner, Lord Yawnley's fame will cease the moment George Stanley returns from Brighton, for he is determined on establishing the *dumb nod*. I have seen him practise it on the Steine. "How d'ye do, George, fine bathing," one would say. A single nod was the only answer. A moment after a dashing belle would attack him. "Stanley, you must drive me to Worthing this morning: Is your curricle here?" A smile and a couple of nods I suppose made an assent. A third seized hold of his arm, and recounted the whole history of a day, while Stanley still simply nodded at every pause, where other people would have exclaimed, "Certainly"—"True"—"Indeed"—

"Indeed"—"Astonishing"—and so on. Stanley leads a very large party, I assure you, and therefore as the beaux with *no eyes* have yielded the palm of notoriety to the beaux with *no memory*, so they in turn must relinquish it to those with *no tongue*."

At this juncture entered Meriton, the Congreve of the age. The Duchess of Derrington was avowed Arbitress of Taste, and she herself was the pupil of Meriton.

"Ah, Meriton," said her Grace, languidly offering her hand.

With a respectful bow he received it and detained it, while he looked tenderly in her face, and in a tone of sensibility said, "You slept ill last night?"

"*Not*

"*Not at all,*" replied she. "There's an Oracle's answer."

"The absence of their usual lustre from these eyes, dissolves the mystery. I am sure you have *not* slept. Let me send Warren to you."

"Can he administer to a mind diseased? Oh, Meriton, how delicately organized is this instrument, the human mind!"

"What shall we liken yours to then?" said Meriton, gaily. "Will you be an Æolian harp, and vibrate random sounds at the arbitrary will of winds? No, that will never do. Be that you ever have been, the sacred Lyre of Apollo; the beauteous instrument which the God himself inspires to favour mortals with the songs of muses, and the notes of Heaven."

"Ah,

"Ah, flatterer, time was I could have smiled and felt the glow of satisfaction when the lips of Taste pronounced my praise. But,—would you believe it, Meriton, I am at present most deeply mortified. While I have been vainly deluding myself with the idea that I received the applause of every one, whose approbation was worth the winning, I have lately discovered that there is a person, whose good opinion I ought seriously to covet, who pronounces the homage of the world, adulation, and the *eclat* of its Idol, Splendid Misery."

"Oh the dismal old Dowager Drabfare, you mean, who is building a methodist chapel at Margate," said Meriton.

"No, really. Not the Dowager. I thank you though for supposing I coveted her good opinion."

"Your

"Your pardon, but in the ranks of elegant society, in the classes of taste, among the liberal and enlightened, I should search in vain for the frigid cynic you describe."

"Oh, no; I have heard her styled elegant, liberal, and enlightened."

"Tell me then her name, that the world may no longer be deceived by an impostor."

"She is called," replied her Grace, with a look full of meaning, "She is called—*The Duchess of Derrington.*"

Meriton, whose modesty was by no means his chief merit, was confounded, and, perhaps, for the first time in his life, was at a loss for a reply.

During this short dialogue, several loungers had entered the room, and making

making a slight *obeisance* to the Duchess, sought their own amusement; some in conversation, others, *a la solitaire,* with a book or a newspaper.

Her Grace, whose spirits mounted a degree at every opening of the door, enjoyed her triumph over Meriton, and her eyes began to sparkle with their wonted vivacity.

"There, go now, Meriton," said she, with a smile. "We have finished the scene, but recollect, I am to have my revenge to-night. You'll be in time at Lady Lustre's; she has promised to indulge me with a chess-board. Bring your *babet* with you, the *young folks,* you know, will dance—Heigho. There, get you gone. I have taken no breakfast, and must make my meal upon scandal.—Vanish, I say, for here comes a first-

a first-rate purveyor of the article I am in quest of."

Meriton bowed and retired.

The reptile whose entrance had been noticed by her Grace, was in the shape of a man. It's eye small and sharp as a ferret's, it's visage meagre and jaundiced, were rendered perfectly grotesque by the double contrast of a black scratch and green spectacles. As it crawled round the rooms, every one, who knew its poisonous nature, retreated. It frequently, however, fastened on an unconscious groupe, and holding a pamphlet to its nose, as if abstracted from all around it, the little reptile would apply both ears to the offices of leeches; these would inhale every syllable above a whisper; and the most innocent truths, which entered these ears in passing to its tongue

or

or its fingers, became poisonous scandal, which, with horrid delight, it would drop along various circles, or print in the form of novels or anecdotes. Its name was, however, in Fashion, and that Omnipotent Deity compelled her votary, the Duchess, to throw open her doors even to Mr. Lance.

While her correct taste therefore discriminated between genuine satire, and the gall of malevolent gossip, her heart despised the wretch, who would eat the bread of a worthy family this week, and the next caricature their weaknesses so broadly to the world, that the nomenclature of his novels, instead of concealing their persons, merely added a nick-name to the ridicule of their public exhibition.

"*Let no such man be trusted,*" was at the tip of her Grace's tongue. Sincerity, however, is not in the catalogue of Fashionable Requisites. With a gracious smile and nod, she changed the sentence for—"Well, Lance, how did you bear your disappointment at the retreat of *Mandane* the other evening?" She alluded to the interruption of the performance of Artaxerxes, in consequence of Mrs. Billington's illness.

"It was shockingly mortifying to the two-shilling people," continued she, "to lose *Water parted from the Sea*, and *The Soldier tired of War's Alarms*. But I am really sorry for poor Billington."

Lance curled up his lip, and exhibited a ghastly grin, which was his *elegant* manner of expressing incredulity.—

lity.—"Your Grace believes the story of the needle then," said he. "Well, there is certainly some *point* in it."

"And if there is no *wound* in the story," said a voice, which proclaimed the return of Meriton, "you know a *Lance* will soon make one."

"Oh, but there must be a wound," replied Lance, undaunted, "in the transit of a needle from the shoulder bone to the *thorax*."

"I have read that sentence this morning in one of the newspapers," said Meriton, "but only *guessed* at the author till now." Then turning on his heel, "Will your Grace favour me for a few minutes? I had almost forgotten I had the honour to be charged with a letter from—"

Lance

Lance was on tip-toe. He was disappointed; for, with great affability, the Duchess, nodding at the satirist, said, "Don't tell me who: you see Lance is gaping for an incident, and we shall find ourselves in the next edition of his "*Camera Obscura, a Satirical Novel.*"

Lance bit his lip, and, if possible, looked more yellow than before. He took the hint however, and mingled with the various groupes, that had by this time occupied the different chairs and sofas, and given to the Breakfast Room of the Duchess of Derrington, the semblance of a Public Library at a watering place.

To pourtray every character, and detail all the *small talk* of the morning, would require, at least, the patience, if not the skill, of the *Author of the*

*the Supplement to the Appendix to the Commentaries on the Apology for the Believers in the Shakesperian Manuscripts.*

Unfortunately, excellence of character was not an absolutely necessary passport at Derrington House; since the Idle, the Profligate, and Unworthy, lounged there under the sanction of their rank, or their notoriety. And though the most welcome guests were those who to title, wealth, or genius, added an unsullied reputation; and though the Duchess of Derrington has been seen to rush by a libertine *Duke*, and a female Gamester *with a coronet*, to take a Siddons by the hand, still the value of this discriminating patronage of genius and worth was, doubtless, depreciated by the sacrifices which a love of notoriety extorted from the consistency of her Grace's

Grace's character; and caused the Sun of Fashion, like the Sun of Nature, to shine alike upon the worthy and the worthless.

Thus in the focus of Derrington House, were assembled a *melange* of characters, from any one of which it were impossible to deduce the taste or morals of the reigning Queen of Fashion. Titled Jockies, and the inventors of a New Philosophy—Bankrupt Nobility, and City Loan-Jobbers; Men of Letters, and grown boys, who scarcely knew their letters, there formed, as it were, a *bourse de ton*, resembling, in confusion and contrarieties, the mixture of all nations on the Royal Exchange at London. A humourist might have skipped from group to group, and from the general topics of horses, the Billington, change of the ministry, dress, quack-medicines,

medicines, church-livings, the turf, crim-con, and the peace, might have gleaned some such cross questions as these:—

"Pon my honour, I gave Tom Meriton a hundred for her; she cost him two. She's the best mare I ever strode; a fine, showy figure, will trot you ten miles an hour, and ——"

"—— carries her voice as high as G, in alto."

"The Catholic Question." "Psha, my Lord, it's a mere blind for the people. Between you and I—"

"—— the *elopement* was necessary, for they say things had got to such a *size*, the *faux pas* could be no longer concealed."

"What

"What a beautiful robe that is of Lady Mary Derrington's! Did you ever see so fine a muslin! I should like the very companion to it. What does your ladyship suppose it would cost?"

"Consumptions, asthmas, rheumatisms, and every other species of disease. Who would be without the Doctor's nostrum?"

"What is your sincere out-of-parliament opinion of the Divorce Bill?"

"It cannot fail, my dear sir, to have an instant effect upon the prices of provisions. Corn has fallen already at Reading-market, and a very particular friend of mine will lose a large sum by a speculation in Parmesan cheese."

Such

Such would have actually been the mixed sentences of fashionable jargon; such would have been the "Gleanings" in a promenade round the Breakfast Room of the Duchess of Derrington.

The pearl hand of a gold French clock, on the chimney-piece, pointed to the hour of three, ere the rooms began to thin; when her Grace retired.

She was once more before her dressing-glass. The magic hands of Howard, with the power of Harlequin's wand, were now about to transform the *languishing belle* of the Breakfast Room, into the *dashing Jehu* of Bond-street. The flaxen locks were changed to a close black scratch, and the loose robe for the close jacket and half-boots.

"The curricle is at the door, mamma," said Lady Mary, entering the Dressing-room. "Who is this letter from?" continued her Ladyship, casting her eyes on the toilette.

"Oh, give it me, child; I *had forgotten it*, as Lord Yawnley would have said. It's from your father; I suppose an official gazette of information, where to direct to him for the next ten days."

Her Grace broke the seal.

With the alteration of the bad spelling, the contents ran thus:—

"Either Vivay, or the South of Italy, must, and shall be our residence for the next five or six years. The choice is with you, but I am resolved on setting off in a week. If

If my heir has lost the Latimore fortune we intended him, it is our duty to let him come to the Derrington one clear of incumbrance. You are aware this can only be done in the way I point out.—In leaving you the choice of your retreat, I prove the affection

Of your loving husband,

DERRINGTON."

Lady Mary, while her mother read the letter, was feeding the vanity of her little mind by gazing on the multitude, who had thronged round the curricle, which was a new and superb specimen of Godsall's taste. From the contemplation of splendour, the haughty Lady Mary was roused to misery by the screams of the Duchess, who gave a loud shriek as she finished the letter,

which was followed by the most violent hysterics.

The gaudy equipage was dismissed from the door, and the Duchess once more, and with aggravated pain, exclaimed, "*I am certainly the most miserable creature in existence.*"

CHAP.

## CHAP. V.

### *A Project.*

ABOUT ten days had elapsed since the disappearance of Oceana, and no tidings of her fate had reached her despairing friends. Every stratagem had been tried, every conjecture proved, every effort strained for her discovery without success. Lord William, overpowered by fatigue of body, and exhausted by the most cruel torture of the feelings perhaps ever inflicted on humanity, sunk at length beneath the weight of anguish, and was seized with a dangerous fever, at his house, at Salt-hill.

The Marquis of Leverton, with filial tenderness,

tenderness, watched the pillow of his uncle, while Captain Melville still employed every hour of every day in almost hopeless search of his lost child of adoption.

At this juncture Mortimer, under disguise, arrived at Salt-hill. He had learnt from public report the indisposition of Lord Derrington, but was ignorant of the cause, having never made known the place of his retreat, as he had engaged to do in his note on the day he disappeared, in consequence of the order to quit the kingdom.

When Mortimer had heard the particulars of Oceana's story, partly from the quivering and parched lips of her despairing father, but chiefly from the Marquis, he dropped upon his knees, at the side of the bed, and taking the feverish hand of his friend between both his

his own, raised it to his lips, and let fall on it tears of genuine sympathy.

"Oh think how well I knew your sufferings, dear Lord Derrington," said he, "when I tell you that these last ten days have been unceasingly occupied in tracing evidence of a conviction, that my heart instinctively received; that it had found a son!—Strange, indeed, is our destiny! After so many years of bereavement, on one and the same day, we both discover our child. Still more strange, your daughter is snatched from your embrace, and perhaps consigned to misery by my—But hold," exclaimed he, rising, and placing his hand to his forehead, "my imagination runs before my judgment. Yet it must be so,"

"What does he mean, my dear boy?" said Lord William, feebly, to his

his nephew, at the same time endeavouring to raise himself up in the bed. "Can it be possible—Was the pretended De l'Epee your son, Mortimer?"

"Pretended De l' Epee," echoed Mortimer, apparently regardless of Lord William. "That's an excellent thought. Pray, my Lord," (to the Marquis) "would it not be possible to obtain a dress exactly similar to that which you describe this pretended De l' Epee to have worn?"

"Nothing more easy," said the Marquis, "but may I enquire for what purpose it is wanted?"

"Leave that to me, my Lord," said Mortimer, "I have worn several disguises in my life, but never yet disguised myself to perform a bad action. If in this I should succeed, two fathers may have

have cause to bless the stratagem; and if it fail, one will, at least, have done his duty. Provide me the habit, and leave the rest to me."

"Nephew you *must*," said the sick Derrington. "I know my Mortimer. His arrival has called my spirit back from death, and it will at least tarry here till it learns the issue of this trial. Go, go, dear Mortimer, and may God prosper your intentions. Let me but live to know her safety, and if it please Heaven to grant me one embrace—but go, go, lose not a moment, or I—"

The exhausted sufferer was incapable of finishing the sentence, but expressed his anxiety by looks and gestures.

The Marquis, taught implicit confidence in Mortimer, by the example of

his uncle, complied immediately with his request, gave him the necessary orders upon the keeper of the wardrobe at the Richmond Villa Theatre, and most sincerely wished success to a design, which at the same time he could not refrain from considering as puerile.

CHAP.

## CHAP. VI.

### *The Idol of Popularity.*

EVERY application from the Derrington family to the Earl of Latimore continued to be treated with unequivocal scorn. The triumph of his artifices was so complete, that every branch of that illustrious house was stripped of the posts of honour or emolument which they had occupied. The court and the nation echoed peals of congratulation to the power and popularity of Latimore, while choruses of calumny, accompanied the retreat of the Derringtons.

The splendour of Latimore's fortune was

was now meridian. He had now attained the summit of his soul's ambition. Nothing was above him but the crown, and that, thanks to the perfect theory of the British Constitution, is not a mark for ambition, but the gift of Heaven by inheritance. Had the fates of Latimore placed his existence in any state where supremacy is open to a general scramble, his spirit had never rested till he had been supreme. No voice of conscience, no dear delight of peace, no horror at the scalping-knife of civil war, taught Latimore to pause short of the crown of empire. The spirit of the British Constitution alone was his barrier, which leaving open to the subject all that can excite and reward industry, valour, talents, and patriotism, still draws a sacred circle round the throne. Thus, though, in Britain, the excusable ambition of a parent sometimes instills into the ear of a child,

"*Who*

"*Who knows but you may some day or other be Lord Mayor or Lord Chancellor, an Archbishop, nay a Prime Minister,*"—who ever heard even *nursery fondness* suggest the idea of a subject's becoming a king? The influence of the spirit of the British Constitution alone saved Latimore from the crime of rebellion. In America, he would have been a President; in France a Chief Consul. In Britain he was every thing he could be when he became Prime Minister!

On this eminence then he reposed, and for a moment intoxicated by the splendour of his elevation, folded to his heart the dignities he had conquered by a perseverance in duplicity, treachery, and murder; and with a smile of mingled triumph and scorn, contemplated the vanquished adherents to integrity and honour, as victims to his

his superior talents, and his more daring soul.

A disclosure of the means, which constituted the villainy of Latimore, or the supposed weakness of the party he displaced, would be highly improper without the excuse of being necessary. The drama of domestic politics can only be thoroughly understood by the principal performers themselves, who give merely the *que* to inferior actors, exhibit only parts of scenes to the public, and admit no spectators behind the curtain.

It is sufficient to observe, that this conquest was not atchieved without the agency of Elmer, whose chief task had been to practise upon an instrument, unfortunately for Lord Derrington, more easily played upon than Hamlet. This was the Duke of——, whose

whose highest and lowest notes Elmer had studied so successfully, that he could cause it to give utterance to any sound, and express any tone at his pleasure. The Earl of Latimore, therefore, in appointing Elmer Secretary of State under this nobleman, was not solely biassed by a desire to reward his agent.

The virtuous principles Elmer had cherished in his infancy, childhood, and youth, made him linger long undecided as to the path he should tread, whether that of desertion from, or of adherence to the conduct and the fortunes of his lord.

The attachment which we feel to those, whom time and habit have gradually taught us to love and esteem, is one of the most powerful deluders of the human mind; and the danger of its power

power over our integrity and judgment is proportioned to our imperceptibility of its influence. That which we should plainly perceive to be vice in other men, we blindly deem to be mere weakness in those we love.

This delusion was Elmer's bane. It disarmed the first suggestions of an ingenuous mind, relative to the designs and motives of a master, whom he reverenced, and whenever a suspicion rose in his mind, he felt the full force of that sentiment so energetically expressed in the lines,

" Accurs'd the sound! and blotted be the hour,
" That shews a monster in the man I lov'd."*

When to this strong feeling is added the influence of temptation on a young, aspiring mind, to which the immediate

* " The Castle of Montval," a Tragedy, by Mr. Whalley.

prospect

prospect of rising to the highest honours in the state, and the hope of obtaining the hand of Lady Julia, were held out as lures, it will not excite much surprise, that Elmer, at length, yielded the scruples of the Man of Honour to the policy of the statesman, and ere he was sensible of his own degradation, actually became the tool of Latimore.

Thus devoted to the views, and blind to the vices of his patron, Elmer, for a time, beheld only the splendour of the minister, and forgot the misery of the man.

The exercise of power, the pomp of office, shed a lustre round the person of the minister, which, though too cold to afford one spark of happiness to his own heart, yet served to draw within the influence of its glittering beams

beams the giddy swarms of gaudy butterflies that ever flutter in the circle of courts, and the black host of leeches, whose putrid food is the corruption of the state.

Already were the levees of Latimore thronged with the votaries of wealth and power. His train was supported by adulation, and groupes of flatterers ever danced before him. Senators waited his nod. Peers listened to his mandates. Battalions marshalled at his signal, his breath floated navies, and the secret spring, which gave motion to the almost miraculous wheel of national Wealth and Commerce, was in the custody of Latimore.

Such was the decorated image that stalked before a nation, creating universal admiration and envy by his extreme elevation.

How

How different was the object that nightly presented itself to the valet, Durand; or, in many hours of privacy, to the friend, Elmer!

On the day when Mortimer proposed to put in execution the project he had conceived for the discovery of Oceana's destination, it so happened that one of the Commercial Companies gave a splendid entertainment to the minister, at the London Tavern. The zeal of the populace had induced them to relieve the horses of the Premier from their burthen, and Lord Latimore and Elmer were conveyed by the mob to Berkley-square, amidst shouts, huzzas, and "Latimore for ever."

The alarmed and terrified sisters of his Lordship met him in the saloon attended by the Bishop and Mr. Winterton,

Winterton, and received him with congratulations on his safe deliverance from such tumultuous demonstrations of esteem.

"The poor devils would do the same thing for Derrington to-morrow," said Winterton, "if he would sacrifice his honesty for popularity."

Lord Latimore sneered.

"Malice, Winterton, sheer malice," said Lady Amelia. "How often have I heard you declaim upon the rights of the people, and propose the savage custom of electing a chief by acclamation! But I believe you democrats are only advocates for the populace while yourselves are popular."

"The sense of acting honestly for the public benefit is, I believe, after all,"

all," said the Bishop, "the only reward a statesman can depend upon. The uncertain breath of popularity cannot soothe the heart, as *poor Miss Melville* once observed."

Lord Latimore trembled!

"Why, Elmer, what ails you?" said Lady Amelia. "You actually changed colour at the mention of poor Oceana! You were desperately in love with her, we all know, don't we, Julia?"

Lady Julia felt faint. "Dear Amelia, cease such levity."

"Nay," continued Amelia, "I am serious. I really think he looks guilty. Come, confess now, there's a good man. Say, didn't you ask young Meriton a hundred questions about his dress? See how he blushes, Julia. 'Twas a bold

bold attempt too for timid, modest Elmer,as we called you at first. Come, now it's all over, let us know where she is—some snug box with an old duenna—eh? Elmer, Brompton, or Roehampton? Come now, man, why don't you speak?"

Elmer really could not speak. He was taken so completely by surprise, that, being but a novice in dissimulation, he was confounded. He was dumb, he smiled, and attempted to laugh, pretended he took it for a jest, and in a faultering accent, at length, said, "Excellent! admirable!"

"Yes," said Winterton, sternly—"She *acts* better than you do, sir."

"Indeed, indeed, I think the subject much too serious to jest about," said Lady

Lady Julia, "at least I feel it too deeply to join in the sport; I must retire."

"You are ill, Lady Julia," exclaimed Elmer with unusual energy. "Good God, you are very ill."

"I am, indeed," said her Ladyship, bursting into tears which she could not check.

Elmer offered her his arm. She looked at him with scorn, refused it, and on the arm of Mr. Winterton and her sister retired, leaving the Under Secretary of State, whose head still rung echoes of huzzas, an object of complete misery.

Lord Latimore had led the Bishop away the instant that the word *Melville* had passed his lips.

Elmer

Elmer felt himself fixed to the spot on which he stood, while his eyes rivetted themselves on the door of the apartment, at which Lady Julia had disappeared.

" She suspects me!" murmured the criminal Elmer, " and she despises me. Fool—Ideot,—Villain," continued he, striking his forehead. " For this then I have bartered honour ; for this I have exchanged the feelings of innocence; for this I have resigned the spirit of independence, and wear the yoke of slavery! In her words, her looks, I saw with rapture the preference which turned my brain. My ardent love, leagued with accursed ambition, blinded my soul to reason, and deafened it to every warning of the voice of conscience.—To gain that lovely prize, I have immersed a spotless soul in filthy pools of State-corruption.

ruption. I have belied the worth I honour, have become a hypocrite, a plotter, a very imp, aye, a most active imp in the infernal work of defamation ; have yielded myself an agent in the war of another Lucifer against another Michael,—a Latimore against a Derrington ! And yet," continued he, placing his hand upon his breast, " this infamy might have been hidden here ; the sting of this guilt might have festered within the very breast on which the cheek of innocence and beauty reclined. Miserable hypocrite as I must have been, still Julia would have deemed me virtuous, and would not have withheld the love which the supposition of that virtue had inspired. But no ; 'twas not enough to be a pliant tool of State-corruption, but I must yield myself a deadly weapon for the destruction of domestic bliss ; nay, in all probability, have been ac-

cessary to murder. If the unfortunate Miss Melville should sink beneath the dreadful shock—*if she should*, alas, she must! O—oh God, how could this head have been so intoxicated, this heart so steeled! Surely there is some potent magic in the voice and countenance of Latimore, that thus my intellectual powers, with every sense of virtue and of honour, wither in his baneful presence. What can I do?—The noble-minded Julia no longer smiles on me. Her quick perception, doubtless, views this altered soul of mine in all its hideous deformity.—When first she questioned me with tearful eyes concerning the fate of her friend, she saw my horror, she observed the tottering of my frame, and at that moment I would have surrendered even the hope of possessing Julia, to have been innocent, and to have merited the tenderness she evinced for me.

me. From that hour suspicion has usurped the throne in Julia's bosom, where love itself once reigned, but never till this instant did I witness scorn upon these beauteous lips. Surely some new event, some damning *proof* perhaps. Oh, who would e'er forsake the onward paths of virtue, to tread the winding ways of vice, were but the inevitable goal to which the deviation leads distinctly visible? Accursed fatal blindness, sure offspring of ambition, whither hast thou led me? O,—oh could I but retrace the steps of a few days of guilt!—Vain, idle dream. Perhaps, at this very moment, the poor sufferer falls by the pressure of despair—dies, and with her last sigh curses the author of her misery."

The whole of this soliloquy was rather thought than uttered. It was

the "still small voice of conscience" in the breast of this *Half-Hero* in the cause of vice. He was yet standing in the same posture in the saloon, when the Bishop, whose approach he had scarcely time to notice, interrupted his soliloquy.

"Mr. Elmer, where are my sisters?" said the prelate, "I have good news for them. A person precisely in the same dress as that of the pretended De l' Epeé, has been waiting for your return most impatiently. I have no doubt he brings intelligence either of, or from Miss Melville."

"Melville! De l' Epeé," exclaimed successively Ladies Julia and Amelia, who, with Mr. Winterton, now rushed out of the apartment, the door of which having been left ajar, admitted

admitted the Bishop's welcome intelligence. "Where is he? Where is he? Did you speak to him?" said Lady Julia.

"It seems the person was desirous of seeing Mr. Elmer before he was introduced to my brother," said the Bishop, "and Henry had ushered him into the library for that purpose. The Earl and myself, however, were about to enter the library, and Henry was, of course, under the necessity of announcing to him that the stranger was there. I have left them together."

"Heaven has heard my prayers," said Lady Julia, "and the wicked authors of our misery have been smitten with remorse."

"God grant it may be so," said the Bishop.

"Amen!

"Amen! Amen!" stammered Elmer, who trembled with surprise, and writhed beneath the torture of agonizing doubts.

From him, however, the attention of all present was instantaneously called off to the horror-striking exclamations and appearance of Lord Latimore, who rushed towards them from the extremity of the saloon. His eyes glared with hideous wildness, his cheeks and lips were pale and cold as if the hand of death had chilled them, while large drops of sweat stood on his wrinkled brow.

"Hide me, hide me from that face; shelter me, Infernals, in your lowest caves of fire, rather than let me meet his damning smile again. Curse on his charities. Dry be the spring of his insulting sympathies. A brand, a brand! Revenge! Give Latimore a burning

burning brand, to fire the heart of Mortimer!"

He sunk exhausted with his face upon the floor.

Elmer, terror-struck, stood motionless. The ladies Julia and Amelia had barely sufficient strength to regain the apartment they had quitted, and ring for the servants; while the Bishop and Mr. Winterton flew to the assistance of the Earl.

The stranger, who had caused this emotion of Lord Latimore, with an air of dignity and composure now entered the saloon, and passing by the senseless body of the Earl, approached Elmer, and beckoning him aside, in a low and solemn tone of voice, which Elmer instantly recognised as Spallanzani's, said, "My visit was to you, Pupil of Latimore.

more. Providence, however, ordained the interview with yon wretched votary of ambition. He has suffered a name to escape his lips, which will infallibly conduct the father of Oceana Melville to his child. Well may you tremble. Guilt dwells not at its ease within the breast of Elmer. I rejoice at such a symptom of compunction.—Oh separate yourself from guilt. Think with what rapture your father would embrace the knees of him, who should restore you to his arms; and I am sure you will assist in the restoration of Oceana to her father. I read amazement in your eyes, But Latimore revives, and I must vanish! This paper will direct you to a spot, where we may confer in private. I see there is a conflict in your mind: I know the strength and danger of temptation to a heart like yours, in the full beat of youthful vigour, and believe me, Edward,

ward, I feel a father's interest in your welfare."

As he pronounced the word "father," he grasped the hand of Elmer with warmth, lifted it to his lips, bedewed it with a tear, and vanished.

"*Edward! Father!*" said Elmer to himself. "God of Nature, why throbs my heart thus at the sound of my own name, or at a stranger's voice, when he pronounced "Father?"

At this moment a deep groan from the Earl re-called the distracted attention of Elmer to the perilous situation of his patron's honour, thus in a moment of delirium exposed to the attending branches of the family and servants.

The wretched Latimore had fainted

as he fell. He now slowly opened his apprehensive eyes, as Elmer wiped the chill dews from his face. The Bishop and Mr. Winterton raised him from the floor, and supported him in their arms. As soon as he saw his secretary, by a violent effort he extricated himself from his supporters, grasped the arm of Elmer, and in a tremulous voice said—"Is Beauclair gone?" "He is, my Lord," replied Elmer. The Earl then reclined his head upon Elmer's shoulder, waved his hand as a signal of dismissal to all other attendants, and in a voice barely audible, whispered Elmer, "To my chamber—to my chamber."

CHAP.

## CHAP. VI.

### *Remorse.*

THE Earl, still leaning on the shoulder of his secretary, paced slowly towards his chamber. As they passed the anti-room, where Durand kept watch, the eyes of Latimore rolled round the apartment with an enquiring gaze. They entered the chamber.—Again with caution slowly he turned round his head, dreading a repetition of the sight that had so much appalled him. Somewhat reassured by the examination, he now trusted his tottering frame to his own support, and pointed towards the door. Elmer understood him, and turned the

the key. After a considerable pause, the Earl said—

"Once more I feel the glow of returning animation. Elmer, come near me. Tell me, my friend, am I to live on, or is this breathing space merely the mockery of a short reprieve?"

"I do not comprehend your Lordship."

"Tell me whether the horrid vision that has harrowed up my soul has been seen by others? Did you see it —did Beauclair behold it?"

"Still, my Lord, Icannot comprehend your meaning,"

"Indeed!" exclaimed the Earl his countenance altering from fear to joy.

joy. "Elmer, your ignorance revives my soul. You saw nothing then?"

"We saw only the person in the disguise of De l' Epeé."

"Enough, enough," rejoined he, "my fortune triumphs. I still am Latimore, still am myself! Had it been visible to any other eye than mine, Beauclair *must* have seen it."

"Seen what, my Lord?"

"Oh, Elmer, a most horrid spectacle. 'Tis true 'twas but a vision, and now 'tis past I can smile at my own terrors. Whether they were caused by some sudden frolic of imagination, or the supernatural agency of departed spirits, I cannot tell. Listen and judge. As the Bishop and myself were entering the library, Henry informed me, that a stranger, in

in the very dress of the pretended De l' Epeé, was there waiting to see Mr. Elmer. Not doubting but that it was Beauclair, and anxious to hear the result of his important expedition, I rushed into the library. Beauclair was standing with his back to the door at which I entered, looking at some books on the table, under the large looking glass. "Well, Beauclair," said I, eagerly, "what of the girl?" I had scarcely uttered the words, Elmer, when the most horrid apparition that ever burst the confines of the grave, stood before me in the form of Mortimer! The same insulting smile sat upon his lips as when alive, while at the same time his bared breast exhibited the gaping wound of murder which this arm inflicted! The sight at once scorched my brain, and froze my blood. I fled with horror from the dreadful spectacle, and, as

you

you saw, fainted, through an excess of terror, of which I am now ashamed."

"Mortimer! Mortimer! He—Mortimer! Most marvellous! Most mysterious!" exclaimed Elmer.

"What mean you?" said the Earl. "You look pale—you tremble—speak, Elmer."

"I am lost in wonder. Your Lordship said that the supposed Beauclair stood with his back towards you—his face towards the mirror. Dare I proceed, my Lord? Ought I to suggest, that the face you saw was, in reality, the reflected image of the living Mortimer?"

"Preposterous supposition! Have I not said it was Beauclair?"

"Your

"Your pardon, my Lord, I have evidence that contradicts that notion. He whom your Lordship supposes to be Beauclair, passed you as you lay extended senseless upon the floor. His dress was the same precisely as that Beauclair assumed, when he carried off Miss Melville, but it was not he, my Lord. The voice and countenance too well discovered to me that it was Spallanzani!"

"Who! Who said you? Spallanzani? What the Astrologer? The tool of Derrington; the wretch who personated Julian of Rosenbergh? Mysterious indeed! But can it be? Did you not issue orders for his removal from the kingdom, as an alien?"

"I did, my Lord, and only learnt this morning from the messenger employed, that he had reason to believe, that

that Spallanzani was still secreted in the family of Lord Derrington."

"D——n! Have I then again been fooled—played upon by a juggler? —No, no; it is impossible. The circumstances cannot be as you suggest, for I as plainly saw the face of Mortimer, aye, and his very wound, as I now behold you, Elmer. And yet I have heard of men, who knowing the form of departed personages, have so worked upon the imagination of their friends, by the aid of optical delusion, as to produce an apparition or resemblance of the buried dead. This Spallanzani may be such an one: his disguises show his art. But can Derrington have stooped so low as to employ such puerile necromancy; or rather, can he have dared so highly as to practice it on Latimore? And yet, if not so, how is this

this mystery to be resolved? You say you are convinced that it was Spallanzani; that same Spallanzani who, we have clear proofs, assumed the form of Julian. You heard his voice, you say; he spoke to you then?"

"He did, my Lord, and to the hour of my death the impression of his words will live upon my heart."

"Indeed! what was their tenour, sir?—Still pale and trembling. By my soul, a tear too."

The agitation of Latimore was extreme at this discovery. "Elmer," continued he, "you know me, I must have no half-friend."

Elmer still faultered--still hesitated.

"Why, man, this is the very weakness

ness of a whining girl," resumed the alarmed Latimore. "Speak, sir. Are you with me, or with my enemies?"

"What new proof, my Lord, is requisite to silence a suspicion so unworthy of your nature? From the first hour you honoured me, a friendless orphan, with your notice, my grateful heart swore an allegiance to your interests, which Fate itself shall never move. As day succeeding day disclosed to me your wondrous powers of mind, reverence for your person mingled with gratitude for your favours, and it may be said that I adored my patron. And when at length you bestowed upon me the title of your friend, and imparted to me the secret emotions of your noble soul, Heaven is my witness how I gloried in every opportunity of lessening your care."

The

The eyes of Latimore, in rapid motion, expressed the apprehensions of his soul.

"What does this preface lead to?" interrupted he. "The retrospection of past services, oft-times prefaces the declaration of desertion. I warn you, sir, that Latimore is not to be intimidated."

The heart of Elmer was torn by a conflict of opposite emotions.

"Desert you! No, while I have one drop of blood, my Lord, I'll stand by you."

"Why all this profession then?—What need of these assurances?"

"Because, my Lord, I am about to tell you that which must shake your confidence,

confidence, the speech of Spallanzani, and its effects upon this heart. I might disguise the one, and conceal the other, but I will deal honestly with my noble patron, though he slay me for my presumption. I will boldly tell him, that I repent of the share I had in the transaction of carrying off Miss Melville.—That I now consider it an outrage which no policy can justify, and that I despise myself for having known so cruel a transaction without preventing it."

The proud heart of Latimore bounded; indignation flashed from his eyes.

"Is it Elmer that I hear? Is it the thing I raised from a beggar's lot to affluence and honour, that thus prates to the creator of his fortune? Think you that I selected you from the herd to read me homilies? What next to such a decla-

a declaration of repentance, sir, is your master to expect from you? Perhaps already your awakened conscience has conducted you to Melville's feet, imploring his forgiveness, and impeaching me."

"Tortures, my Lord, may tear this frame to atoms, but tortures never shall exact from these lips one syllable that Latimore has decreed shall not escape them. I never have—I never will betray my master."

"What means this whining cant then? To what end do you direct these solemn vows? I hate them in the mouth of any man, but most of all in his, who knows, or ought to know, that policy invented them to keep a blinded multitude in awe of those who rule them. Again you tremble."

"In

"In truth, my Lord, I tremble at your doctrine. I am an altered man. Circumstances have impelled me to an introspection of myself, and this night's adventure only accelerates a confession I have for some days meditated to lay before you. Hear me, patiently, I beseech you, and though my heart sickens at the resolution, yet I do resolve to act hereafter implicitly as you direct."

"I *will* have patience," said the Earl, to whom the apprehended defection of Elmer had given new vigour; as the energies of his gigantic mind were ever most powerful at the approach of danger. Wrapping round him a crimson velvet *robe de chambre*, he threw himself into a chair, folded his arms, and fixed his eye on the abashed, and shrinking Elmer,—exclaiming

"Now,

"Now, Penitent, proceed."

"If to believe that in the course of human life there are two paths of action, distinctly leading the one to happiness, and the other to misery, and to feel conviction that I am traversing the latter, be symptoms of repentance, I freely own myself a Penitent."

"Go on, sir, I am patient," said the Earl.

"You found me, I am bold to say, a traveller in the better road. I was blinded by the splendour of your situation, still more by the splendour of your talents, till I saw no distinction but those of greatness and insignificance. I divided mankind, not into the vicious and the good, but into Fools and Philosophers, and my pride having induced me to class myself with the latter,

ter, self-love instilled the dangerous delusion, that to be wise was to be happy. And what was this boasted wisdom but a dangerous freedom from the wholesome restraint of moral law, and religious obligation? I mounted then, as if by privilege, on pinions of impiety, over the heads of other men less daring. I saw in you, my Lord, the triumph which the man of policy is sure to gain over the man of principle, and though I knew your hands to be imbrued in blood, I still could venerate a murderer. How was this? It was the two-fold influence of the splendid meteor, Ambition, upon my head and heart. Its baneful beams eclipsed the purer light of reason and overpowered the milder fires of nature. I became an image of policy itself, which though it has eyes that stretch to the extent of human vision, ears open, and alive to every whisper that

steals from human lips, and strong-nerved arms that grasp the compasses of human possibility, still lacks the human heart. That source of sympathies and feelings is exchanged by policy, for an icy faculty of comprehension which enables it to survey and estimate the movements of the hearts of other men, and coldly calculate the rise, the progress, and effects of Nature's various impulses upon her genuine sons, without experiencing itself one warm pulsation, or one generous glow.

"Just such a thing as this, my Lord, was I when the glittering lures of the high offices I hold, and Lady Julia's hand and fortune, were held out to me: at that time my ambitious brain would have impelled these hands to any act that was deemed necessary to obtain those objects. But, shall I say happily

happily or unhappily my Lord, a further acquaintance with the virtuous Julia soon convinced me how incapable of happiness is heartless policy. I sought her from ambitious views; I saw her lovely form, and read her noble mind. New feelings prompted me, and I learnt this truth, that human bliss can only flow from the pure channel of an honest heart. Love's impulse taught me, that the automaton of ambition, moving by the mechanism of cold policy, though elevated to supremacy itself, is but a splendid puppet, the toy of chance and circumstance, without one innate joy: while he whose words and deeds are emanations of the unsophisticated heart, though hurled by fortune to the lowest depths of outward woe, still feels within himself a never-failing source of present consolation and of future hope. — 'Twas then, my Lord, I started from ambition's dream, but it was then to

late. The source to which I would have fled for happiness was then contaminated. My heart made no response to virtue's voice; integrity's bright image was not reflected there. The youthful breast that should have been the temple of generous emotions, congenial to the season of my life, was, as the penetrating eye of Julia soon discovered, the chill cavern of state-stratagems, of plots, contrivances, and cheats; a dark repository of secret conspiracies against the peace of families. Her frowns, her scorn have well expressed the indignation of her soul, and if the torture they have occasioned me admits a palliative, it is this, they prove to me, that I have still a conscious monitor within, that I have still a heart!"

Here Elmer paused, and attempted to read, in the looks of Latimore, the impression of his speech. He sat silent,

lent, and seemed rather in consultation with his own mind, than attentive to the effusions of Elmer. This silence continued some moments. At length Elmer resumed.

"I perceive, my Lord, that you regard me not; my declarations appear to you weak and puerile. They may be so:—but, my Lord, they are the sentiments of my heart, and it was impossible to resist the impulse which I felt to utter them. I am aware that this display, of what you consider weakness, will cost me the sacrifice of your approbation; I regret it, but it was the only price at which I could obtain my own."

"My friend, you wrong me much," said Latimore with a cold smile.—"Your explanation has removed my first suspicion, and I admire your honesty;

nesty. I do not say that you will make a convert of me: for all that you have urged, I myself pondered on before I chose my road. But to prove that your opinions have not sunk you in my esteem or confidence, I ask your honest sentiments as to the best mode of finding out this Spallanzani, who and what he is?"

Here Elmer related the very words which Spallanzani had used to him in the saloon, and concluded with saying, "Would to God, my Lord, your interests permitted me to comply with the old man's entreaties, and to restore Miss Melville to her friends: such is my ardent wish. Yet still, believe me, that though the welfare of my soul were poised against the honour and the fame of Latimore, it would not prove a feather's weight in the preponderance of Elmer's resolution. I have yielded

yielded me, yes, if it must be so, even to my own perdition."

The Earl himself was struck with the determined air, and energetic manner with which Elmer concluded; for tho' the wary nobleman feigned a spirit of conciliation to the contrite secretary, nothing was farther from his intention, than to continue to him his confidence. His resolution was formed the moment he perceived the awakened tenderness of Elmer's conscience. To prevent the possibility of injury accruing to himself from the present state of the Penitent's mind, was now the chief object of Latimore's thoughts. A scheme for that purpose had presented itself to his fertile brain, which, to carry into execution, rendered it necessary that he should equally disguise his contempt of these virtuous qualms, and his dread of their effects.

Elmer's

Elmer's last sentence seemed somewhat at variance with his preceding discourse, and Latimore started when he heard it. Concealing his surprise, however, he took him cordially by the hand, exclaiming—" There spoke the spirit of a man ! A Hero !—Once embarked, my Elmer, on ambition's seas, a man must laugh at those concussions of the elements, which shake with dread the petty voyagers on life's calmer currents. But enough of sermonizing; what says your paper? Where is the place of private conference with this devil, Spallanzani, for actually he possesses more than human ingenuity to assume so many forms."

Elmer presented the unfolded paper to the Earl. " Read it yourself, my Lord. I have not yet looked at the contents. Can I give you a clearer proof of my fidelity?"

The

The Earl unfolded the paper, and perused these words:—

"There is a private door in Park-lane which leads to the gardens at the back of Derrington House. From eleven o'clock this evening till day-light a servant will be in waiting there. Give three distinct knocks, and you will be instantly conducted to one who, though apparently a stranger to you, has a secret to impart, which involves your dearest interests. When the gate is opened to you, remember the pass word is—"MORTIMER."

The paper shook in the hands of Latimore, as his eyes ran over its contents, but when they came to the signature it dropped on the floor, and the Earl stamped his foot on it, exclaiming, in a paroxysm of rage, "Withered be the hand that wrote the damned scrawl!"

Then grasping Elmer's arm, "Monster! Tormenter! Devil! Instantly explain this mystery; tell me how the handwriting of the dead Mortimer has thus been counterfeited, or tell me that the events of my whole life are dreams; that Mortimer is still alive, and that I am not a murderer!"

Elmer extricating himself, took up the paper and perused it, while the Earl covered his face with his hands.

"Whatever else is mystery," said Elmer, "that Mortimer lives is plain.—'Twas his living self, my Lord, that in the form of Beauclair stood before you. Your recognition of his face was not, could not be imaginary. And your acquaintance with this his signature, places the blessed truth beyond a doubt. Oh, look, look up, my noble patron! See days of peace and joy before you."

"Peace!

"Peace! Joy!" said Latimore with unmeaning stare. "Mortimer alive! 'I dug his grave myself,' said Benson. What if he deceived me? Psha, here, here is his blood: I still feel the drops warm as they spouted on my hand.—Nothing can be surer than that I slew him. What then can be intended by this imposture?"

"Tis not an imposture, my Lord; I feel assured it is not. Your hands are purified of the foul crime of murder. Your noble nature will now heave off the load that has weighed it down so long; no more will it need disguise, but be displayed in godlike acts of general benevolence."

"Silence, babbler!" exclaimed Latimore. Then relapsing into soliloquy,—"Never," continued he, "till this moment, has the idea of the possibility

lity of such a thing once floated in my brain. If then it should prove not only possible but really so! Horrid idea, vanish; my brain cannot endure thy operation. Mortimer alive! Mortimer himself to tell his tale! What then avail the anxious cares of more than twenty years? To what end have I placed a centinel upon my sleeping hours? To what end entrenched myself in lies, dissimulation, and disguise? Or to what end separated the daughter from father, and perhaps given her to death itself! Oh futile labours all, if after such a lapse of time, the CRIME ITSELF stalks forth, and to the wondering world proclaims the CRIMINAL!"

"This is a dæmon's exhibition of the picture, my Lord. Some better angel whispers me that Mortimer returns the harbinger of peace to your long-

long-troubled soul. Had not the spirits of revenge and envy been totally extinguished in the hearts of him and of his patron, might they not long ere this have seized an opportunity of gratifying both?"

"Peace, fool, peace!" interrupted Latimore, in a voice, and with a countenance more troubled than Elmer had ever yet witnessed.

"I see it now," continued he, "there is not in the circle of the sciences an axiom more plain. Admit but this one proposition—'Mortimer survived the blow,' and every phænomenon becomes a simple inference. And still, *could* Benson, with all the vulgar terrors on his soul, could hedeceive me in his death-bed declaration? It staggers my belief; and yet against this weighs the apparition of Julian, at Vienna, at Naples, Paris, and now in London: the

the expression of old Julian, which none but he or Mortimer could use—*Living Monument of Splendid Misery!* again, his residence with Derrington: but the most damning proof of all, his face, his very face; and now his signature. Oh, my ambitious soul, must Latimore's proud star vanish at last beneath the opposing and malignant destinies of Derrington and Mortimer? Perfection of malignity! Why, in my infancy, did not the Fates cut short the thread of life? Or why did not the arm of Derrington or Mortimer, when first in enmity we grappled, send me to oblivion's eternal shades? Was it that the words of Julian should indeed be verified, when he said, "*I swear to you that never have mankind yet witnessed such a union of Misery with Splendour, as awaits Lord Latimore.*"

Ere Elmer could reply, Durand made

made the usual signal of sounding a silver bell, in the anti-chamber, to denote that some important business rendered it necessary to interrupt the privacy of his Lord. Latimore started; his hand flew instinctively to the poniard he wore in his bosom, and, with a look of horror directed towards the door, he stood mute and motionless.

Again the silver bell tinkled. "Why don't you move, man?" said the Earl to Elmer. "Unlock the door."

Elmer obeyed. The Swiss appeared, and in French related, that a sailor waited with a letter in the hall, which he resolutely persisted in delivering to the Earl himself; that the servants could neither make him deliver the letter to them, nor compel him to quit the house, and come another time; and that, as he had attempted to force himself

himself up stairs, it was thought best to interrupt his Lordship.

"A sailor! He comes from Beauclair, no doubt," said Elmer.

"From the *real* Beauclair, I trust," said Latimore. "Go, sir, bring the man hither; but beware:—no stratagems, no practisings upon Latimore. I begin to doubt you, Elmer. Your insinuation of peace and reconciliation did not escape me; but remember, sir, no more disguises, for by my destiny, if you bring us once again together, you know I have the means within my grasp, and the murder will be at your instigation. You understand me."

Elmer bowed, and was retiring.—"Hold!" exclaimed Latimore. "Durand must remain here till your return. I shall lock the door. When you return, sound the bell twice in the anti-

anti-room. I am not sure but that by some collusion the damned image may stalk into my very chamber. Go, be quick."

Durand locked the door, and stood centinel against it.

CHAP.

## CHAP. VII.

### *A Sailor's Story.*

LATIMORE, thus left without an auditor, gave vent to the horrible emotions which the idea of Mortimer's existence gave rise to. His soul was now the prey of the most racking jealousies. Benson, it was plain, had deceived him; he knew he had assisted in the escape of Olivia, and, as he imagined, now had aided in the recovery of Mortimer.—Even when the improbability of his enemies so long refraining from revenge was considered, it added to his despair, as

as it was accompanied with the conviction that they had only delayed the stroke till he had attained that summit which destiny had promised him; the being hurled from which would be just so much more painful and humiliating to him, as it was more glorious to his triumphant foes.

The little bell announced the return of Elmer. The chamber door was thrown open, and, as Durand retired, the secretary introduced a sailor, whose dress and appearance were rough as his own element, but whose face bore the marks of an honest and intelligent mind. Addressing himself to the Earl,

"May I be so bold as to ask your name?" said he.

"My

"My name? Do you not know I am the Earl of Latimore?"

"Then I'm in the right hammock at last. I fancy your honour knows something of one *Bob-Clare.*"

Latimore frowned.

"*Beauclair* you mean, my friend," said Elmer.

"By Nelson I don't know whether 'twas Bo or Bob, but I am sure it was Clare," said the sailor. "But that's little odds now, poor fellow. Bo or Bob, the sharks have his hull, and as for his soul, *the Board above* don't pay much respect to names."

Latimore was again knitting his brows in anger at the honest rudeness of the tar, when the conclusion of his sentence

sentence awakened another passion, —Fear.

"Is Beauclair dead, man?" said he. "Do you come to tell me that Beauclair is dead?"

"Yes, my Lord, I come on purpose to tell you so."

"Where—how—what? Why don't you speak? Tell me what you have to tell in few words."

"I ask your pardon; you shall have it. It was, I think, last Wednesday, when we were cruising off Yarmouth, just about mid-watch, there came on one of your proper squalls. My heart how the great guns did rattle, and the blue fires play about our rigging! —Mountains high we rolled, and down we were again; it seemed, as I may

say, a sort of toss between the ham mocks of the Cherubs up aloft, and the purser's birth in old Nick's locker; and I believe every soul on board fancied the time was come, when they were to be left for ever at one place or the other. For my part I couldn't think that I had any right to mix with angels, and yet I felt as if I never could keep company with the pursers and the devils. So I cheered my heart this way—"Providence orders all these things," thought I, "and he will not be so unjust as to place me for ever with rascals, that would murder a fellow creature for the price of his wages; and so if I mayn't be fit company to set at the table in heaven, he will make me a swabber, or a door-keeper, mayhaps, and I'd rather be lowest in the happy place, you know, than the grandest among the miserable."

"Elmer

"Elmer, he tortures me," said Latimore, in a low voice; "bid him dispatch his errand."

"Be quick, my man," said Elmer, "his Lordship is unwell, and cannot bear much talking."

"Somehow I thought he didn't look well," said the sailor. "Well, after the storm abated (and it didn't hold us long), the rain came down in waterspouts, and it was dark as a purser's soul. There was now and then a flash of lightning, but the thunder had took itself off to the northward. So we lay snug at our anchors, and in a double allowance of grog we drowned all thoughts of the storm. I had, I remember, just drank to the health of my *Nance*, and the three young-ones, when the signal minute guns from a ship in distress, made my heart thump against my side, and damme

damme down rolled the grog. A few minutes after, by the flashes of lightning, we descried a wreck floating in the distance, and a boat over-crowded with people, making towards the Valiant, our ship. "Out with the boats," was the general shout, and our ship-boats were instantly manned with volunteers in the cause of humanity. Not a second of time was lost; and yet when the next blue flash trembled on the water, the boat was not to be seen, and the wreck had floated to a distance, which left it scarcely visible."

"Did all on board the boat perish?" interrupted Elmer.

"You shall hear," replied the sailor. "We had lanterns in the boats, which we held out as signals, and threw out several ropes in the hope that some of the unfortunate crew might have strength and skill enough to

to reach them. But of the many unhappy fellow creatures on board her, not a soul reached our boats except your friend, Bob,—I beg your pardon, *Mr.* Clare."

"Oh God!" exclaimed Elmer in an agony of soul. "Not one—not beside Beauclair!" Then, in a stifled inward tone, he added, "I have murdered her—I have murdered her."

"Well, friend, proceed," said Latimore, eagerly. "You said Beauclair is dead; then—then, if I understand you,—I say, if I understand you,—not a soul of all the crew or passengers in the vessel from which Beauclair swam, now survives."

"*Not one*! Not one—poor souls," said the sailor, with an emotion that displayed the genuine sympathies of

nature, better than volumes of eloquence could describe them.

"Go on, my good fellow, go on," said Latimore, with a countenance brightening from fear to hope. "You say Beauclair reached the boat."

"Yes, your honour, he lived to reach the Valiant. We got him to a warm hammock, and if it hadn't been for an ugly blow on the head, which he received from the falling of the mast, he would have been alive now, but our surgeon pronounced his wound fatal the moment he saw it, and honestly told the poor gentleman he had not long to live. Every thing was done that could be done; and when it was found he must die, our Chaplain came, and would have palavered a little with poor Clare; but somehow he didn't much like the thoughts that the parson wanted to put in his head, but begged

begged I would stay by the side of the hammock, as he wished to speak to me *alone*. When we were by ourselves he told me, as I thought, that his name was Bob Clare, and then he went on about my honest looks, and some jabber of that sort. Says he, "It is in your power to give me real comfort, and to make me die happy. I hope your own heart will reward you, for I have nothing left to offer you." And sure enough, he was right there; for when I picked him up he had not a rag about him but a pair of flannel drawers, and a quart bottle, which was slung over his shoulder by a cord. And what do you think this great matter was, that was to make him die happy, but that I should swear to deliver this same bottle, which it seems is full of papers and writings, into your honour's own hands; for he had heard that the Valiant was to be paid off in a day or two.

Why, is this the mighty matter, says I, tell me where I am to deliver it, and into whose hands, and damme if old Nick gets it out of my clutches till it comes to the right owner. "One thing more, my friend," said the dying man, "and my spirit will rest in peace:—promise me not to mention to any living creature where you deliver this bottle." "What business is it to any one?" says I. "Nobody'll ask me but my *Nance*, and I never satisfy a woman's curiosity, for there would be no end of that. So as far as depends upon me, make your mind easy, and die in peace." He then delivered me the bottle, and directed me here. "But can I do no more for you, my hearty," says I.—"Wouldn't you wish a wooden box, and a dry grave? As we shall be in port to-morrow or so, and shall touch the *little Newlands*, why I think it might be managed among us, though

you

you say you have no friends." "It is my earnest wish, that you commit me to the deep," says he. "Promise me to see it done, and to convey the bottle as I have directed you, and I shall die happier than I deserve! God forgive me all my sins." These were the last sensible words poor Clare spoke. His brain went off in a high gallop, and he raved about rapes, and murders, and devils, for an hour or two, and then he died. As the bottle which was slung across his shoulder had been spied by my messmates, I knew it would be asked for, and so I takes me to a stratagem. I empties me a bottle of Hollands, and fills it with a parcel of old letters, which I had kept by me, of my poor brother Ned's; I puts in a cork, and seals it over with wax. Now thought I, if they ask for it, I'll pretend this is it, and I'll swear that he ordered me to sink it, and if I must do so, Ned's

Ned's ghost must forgive it, as 'tis ten to one if ever they are of any use now. However, I saved both my bottles, for pretending to bury it with him when we sewed him up in a hammock to commit him to his watery grave, I contrived to slip in an empty bottle, and preserved Poor Ned's rigmarole letters."

"You are a noble fellow," said the Earl. "So then Beauclair is at the bottom of the deep, and now for his papers. Though," continued the Earl, with a look of recollection and importancy, "I know not why he writes to me. I suppose—I imagine he wishes me to take care of his father, as he was once in my service, and I suppose that made the delivery of them material to his peace of mind."

"It seemed of vast importance to him, your honour," said the sailor, "btu

"but be it as it may, here is the packet." The honest fellow then threw open his jacket, and produced the bottle.—"There, your honour," continued he, "please to take it in your own hands. There, I have fulfilled my promise to a dying fellow creature, and now, your honour, if you were to draw the cork, and his ghost should bounce out of the bottle, the devil a bit should I wince, for no dead man's spirit can lay any thing wrong to the charge of Will Elmer."

The impatience of the Earl to take the bottle, and his anxiety to learn its contents, prevented him from observing the emotions of the secretary, who at the mention of "Will Elmer," started and trembled, while his cheek was alternately crimson and pale. Recovering himself, however, before his surprise was observed, he surveyed the

the sailor from head to foot with a minutenessthat confirmed certain conjectures, which the mention of his name had given rise to. While pondering how to act, the Earl turned to him, and said,

"The man must have some reward for his faithful behaviour to—to my old servant. Give him ten pounds."

"Why, please your honour, I didn't look to this reward," said Will Elmer, "But as the war's now over, and I don't grow younger, Nance may blame me for refusing it. I have squandered hundreds, my Lord, or I needn't have been before the mast. So for Nance and my children's sake I'll e'en take it and thank your honour."

"Come with me," said the still trembling

trembling secretary, and the two Elmers left the Earl alone, with his eye fixed on the legacy of his agent Beauclair thus singularly brought before him.

"Mysterious Fate!" said he, in soliloquy. "He is a bold man who dare unfold the pages of thy portentous volume, where are emblazoned all his future destinies! Why do I hesitate to gather, instantly, the secret knowledge hidden in this little vessel, but from a dread of parting with that hope of *her destruction*, which the story of this fellow gives me, for a certainty of her existence? *Her* existence!" continued he, as his eye fell on the open letter of Mortimer. "Her existence! Why do I waste a care upon her, when possibly, O more than possibly, he—my dire foe himself; he,

the source of all I dread, may at this instant be plotting my disgrace and overthrow. The thought alone is hell's fiercest torture!"

He snatched the bottle from the table. His hand trembled as he held it. He replaced it, and walked about the chamber in a state of mind truly miserable.

Elmer returned. "Oh, my Lord," said he, "is she alive? Or has this wretched heart another and a fouler crime to bear?"

"I also dread and tremble to enquire," said the Earl, pointing to the bottle, "but my dread is that she is alive; that she survives to tell the story of Latimore's defeat in Beauclair's death. I tremble lest the damsel should return. Then should we have old hags squalling

squalling about the town.—" *The true and marvellous History, how a good Providence had interfered to baffle the cruel plots of a wicked Nobleman!*" But what is the promise of the heavenly orbs? What is the witness of a man's own spirit, if it should come to that? If—but it never can be! Ere Latimore can become the *Rawhead and Bloody-bones* of Grub-street Chronicles; ere such a destiny could be Latimore's, effulgent and illustrious Jupiter himself must fall from his high and brilliant sphere, and his ruin shake this Earth, and all the other worlds to their primeval nothingness. Allied to thee, soul animating orb, on thine influence my spirit rests. On all thy sons, from the first dawn till now, Honour and Prosperity, Success and Glory have attended. Nor shall a dastard doubt one moment longer cloud my brow.—Henceforth,

my

my fear-bound soul, be free! The son of Jupiter will not resolve on folly's prompting; he will plan with wisdom as well as grandeur, and his noble daring shall be succeeded by as noble deeds. Now, sir, for the papers: I am prepared for their contents."

Elmer broke the bottle, and placed the papers, consisting of five letters, on the table.

The Earl impatiently snatched one of them, and, without looking at the superscription, began to read.

"What is all this?" exclaimed he, with surprise. "What does this mean? "Believe me, truly and affectionate- "ly, my dear brother, yours,

"Edward Elmer."

Elmer

Elmer had by this time examined the superscriptions of the others which were directed "To William Elmer."

The Earl and his secretary stood staring with mute astonishment at each other. The former first broke the silence.

"Can you lead me to any conjectures upon this insult?" said he.

"It is plainly a mistake of the poor fellow's, my Lord. In the hurry of his zeal he has left here the bottle, containing his own letters, instead of Beauclair's, which, doubtless, he has with him, or has left at home."

"Home! Where is his home? The papers may fall into the hands of some who may understand them. What does he call himself? Where does he live?

live? Elmer! Elmer!—Why how is this? His name is your name. Do you know him? He did not seem to know you. Why do you redden so? Are you in any plot against me? You dare not say you are."

"Oh no, my Lord; my life, my soul upon my innocence, but it is a marvellous incident."

"Marvellous! Well, explain it.—We have dealt in the marvellous to-day. Do you know the man?"

"Yes—yes, yes, my Lord. Why should I deny it? You know that my origin is humble. I have never deceived you on that subject any more than another. He is my kinsman."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, my Lord. He is my maternal

ternal uncle. I started when he mentioned his name, and by a narrow examination of his features, I traced lineaments of a face that was familiar to me about nineteen years ago, but which within that period I have never seen till this night."

"Marvellous indeed!"

"No less true than marvellous, I assure yourLordship. I will explain the seeming mystery in a very few words. I was born at London; my mother died the same hour which gave me birth, and my father, whose business occasioned him to reside abroad, died on the continent when I was three years old. This I learnt from my mother's brother, under whose roof I was sheltered till my fifth year, when his concern as a merchant failing, he was compelled

pelled to quit England to avoid a prison. I sailed with him for New York, in a vessel called The America, of which at that time his brother, the very sailor who was in this room to-night, was Master and Commander. He was then a careless giddy man about two or three and twenty. On our arrival at New York, my uncle had the mortification to learn, that the friend, on whose assistance he then rested, had been dead ten days. This blow, added to his other misfortunes, occasioned a depression of spirits, which brought on a rapid decline, and in less than three months after our arrival he died. His brother, the dissipated and thoughtless Captain, had sailed for England, and I was left at that early age without a friend in the world. Heaven, however, sent a protector in the person of the Reverend Mr. Newton, who being

being upon the eve of returning to England, benevolently took me under his care, educated me under his own roof, and sent me at sixteen years old to the University of Oxford. Three years afterwards, while I was yet at college, my generous protector died, and having only very distant relations who were well provided for, left to me his all, which consisted of about one hundred a year in the funds and some furniture, and a valuable collection of books. Thus, from the bounty of this good man, I received a liberal education, and from his own conversation, and constant correspondence, stored my mind with such knowledge of mankind, as is seldom obtained at so young an age.

"Such was my situation, my Lord, when I obtained from the tutor of our hall, a recommendation to Lord R—, your

your Lordship's Secretary of Legation. I was so fortunate as to obtain your notice, and that enviable patronage has elevated me to the present rank which I hold in society, and the prouder hopes I cherished. It is a splendid elevation, my honoured patron, to which I have climbed; but ere it can be a happy one, I must reconcile my heart to the steps by which I ascended."

"But to this sailor, sir, if you please. You own him for your uncle?"

"Why should I not, my Lord?—He was always imprudent, and it was predicted by his brother, that he would always be poor. But he has displayed Humanity, Sympathy, Fidelity, and Benevolence,—qualities which ennoble him as a man, and atone for his follies as a sailor."

"And

"And yet you say this interview, for which you are indebted to chance, is the first you have had since you sailed with him nineteen years ago."

"In truth, my Lord, it is! I heard, indeed, that his indiscretions had led naturally to his poverty, and that destitute of every thing, he entered into the navy as a common sailor, fifteen years ago. From that time I have been unable to learn any account of him.—His person and his manners are so altered that if he had not to-night mentioned his own name, he might have left this room without having been recognized by me."

"One question more, sir, and I have done. How happens it that you bear your *mother*'s brother's name? Was your father's name Elmer also?"

"There,

"There, my Lord, you strike a chord that pains me," said Elmer, with a sigh. "I am, as far as relates to my father," continued he, "in the unhappy situation of a Foundling. I never knew my father. My mother resided at her brother's, and was dependent entirely upon him, when she married. Her marriage was in defiance of his wishes, and it was her death that, in his opinion, atoned for her disobedience. My father was abroad when she died and I was born. The relatives of my father all resided in a part of the island remote from the metropolis, and I was therefore delivered to my uncle's care. Being a bachelor, he placed me under the care of a nurse, who was ignorant of my real name, and I believe, with many others, considered me as the illegitimate child of my uncle.—From some cause, unknown to me, my

my uncle so disliked my father, that his name never once escaped his lips; he died without imparting it to me, and to this hour I know not to whom I owe my being."

"And is all this story really as you relate it? It is indeed an uncommon train of circumstances. But I suppose you availed yourself of your uncle's unexpected appearance to make some enquiries?"

"Neither the time or place, my Lord, permitted me to do more, however anxiously I wished otherwise, than to obtain his address. He lives, or rather his wife lives, at Greenwich.—He called on her this morning, in his journey from Plymouth hither, and has doubtless left Beauclair's important papers with her by mistake. It is impossible to conceive a motive for a design

design in the wrong delivery. But the papers may be of the utmost consequence. Shall I then, my Lord, order a chaise, and proceed thither instantly?"

"How, sir! Have you so soon forgotten your midnight assignation at the back door, in Park-lane?" said the Earl, pointing to Mortimer's letter. "This is a day of mysteries and adventures; the aspect of the Heavens denotes important issues near at hand. Let the concussion come! I feel my spirit mount. I feel that I shall vanquish.—Now then hear my resolve. Go you, Elmer;—yes, go you, and comply with the reqnest of this Mortimer: be he the real foe of Latimore, or his champion, or his master's champion,—see that you carry him, from me, the gauntlet. I have too long trifled, but now the time is come.

The

The hand of Fate points to the hour of action. Go then, from me, your Lord, to Derrington, to Mortimer, to Leverton, and all their agents, human or infernal, bear this defiance. Proclaim to them, that he prepares to hurl the thunderbolt of his powerful hate; and bid them tremble for their lives, their Fame, and their posterity."

Here he paused.

Then in a more gentle tone—

"In the mean time I will dispatch a courier to *Greenwich*, who shall simply state the mistake, and ask for the other bottle. These letters you had better keep yourself till you see your relation. I should suppose two or three hours may be sufficient for both of these purposes. I shall not seek my pillow till the return of both. 'Tis now

now near one. Where is the Manifesto which you said Lord G— had received from the Electorate? Public business shall have my thoughts while you are absent,—but remember that it is Latimore you serve. Look to your allegiance—look well to your allegiance, and you shall find me grateful for your loyalty."

Elmer deposited the letters of his uncle in his pocket-book, and withdrew.

CHAP.

## CHAP. VIII.

### *A Trick.*

WHEN Mortimer, in the disguise of De l' Epeé, quitted the saloon, he walked out of the court-yard of Latimore house, muffled up in his great-coat, and turned towards Piccadilly. At the corner of Berkley-square he was accidentally accosted by William Elmer, the sailor, who desired to be directed to Lord Latimore's. Mortimer started, as he would have done at any time, had the name of Latimore unexpectedly struck his

ear. In the present instance, however, there was a double excitement. He thought he knew the voice, and instead of immediately directing the enquirer to the Earl's, he paused with an endeavour to recollect it. He could not. "Who did you enquire for, friend?" The man repeated his question. "Great God, can I be mistaken!" exclaimed Mortimer. "Is it William Elmer I am speaking to?"

"You have got my name pat enough," said the sailor, "but by Nelson I don't know you."

"But you shall know me before we part, my brave fellow. You cannot so entirely have forgotten the husband of your sister."

"What!

"What! Mortimer Sidney! Lord, have mercy upon me; it must be a ghost."

"No ghost, I assure you; let this warm hand be the pledge of a heart as warm in your service. But this is no place—yonder is a coffee-house, let us step in."

"Why, I have some business on my mind I would first get rid off, at this same Lord Latimore's."

"Oh, but a few minutes cannot be of consequence. Besides, I may have something to suggest upon the nature of your business. I know this Lord, and I have some questions to put to you, which must be answered before we part. Come, come."

They were soon seated in a private room at the coffee-house.

*Mortimer.* "Why you are strangely altered. What, a *common* sailor's jacket, Will! Why how is this? Has Fortune frowned on you as well as Edward? I have learnt his misfortunes here in England, and that it is supposed he and my poor boy died in America."

*W. Elmer.* "No, no; not the lad—not your son."

*Mortimer,* "Thank God, thank God!—Then I have found him."

*W. Elmer.* "I suppose you mean he has found you, friend Sidney; for it was given out, that you had died in some duel, or some assassination abroad

abroad. The right of the story never came to light though."

*Mortimer* (*with emotion*). "Nor has it yet; but I trust that the day of retribution is at hand. But of your brother."

*W. Elmer.* "He died at New York."

*Mortimer.* "That agrees well. One question more. Do you remember the nurse's name where my poor boy was placed?"

*W. Elmer.* "I think I once heard it, she lived at Wandsworth."

*Mortimer.* "She did so, and her name was Stephens."

*W. Elmer.*

*W. Elmer.* "It was—it was so—the very same."

*Mortimer.* "Then it is he, beyond all doubt."

*W. Elmer.* "Well, but if I may be so bold, I think you are in a different character, as well as myself, since we saw each other last. What have you turned a Roman Priest?" (Alluding to his dress as De l' Epeé).

*Mortimer.* "At present I cannot enter into particulars, but this habit is only a disguise put on to gain some information of a particular nature."

*W. Elmer.* "Damme, I hope you an't a spy in some foreign service.—

By

By G— I would not drink with you if I thought you was."

*Mortimer.* "No no, honest Will, it relates to Lat—to my son."

*W. Elmer.* "What have you been hunting him in masquerade then?"

*Mortimer.* "I saw him first by accident. His name, and some strong resemblances to his mother, made me entertain the flattering hope that he was mine. He bore your name."

*W. Elmer.* He never knew any other. Poor Ned, you know, loved money, and hated you for having none. A travelling tutor, as he called you, he thought beneath my sister, and

and therefore never would hear your name."

*Mortimer.* "Peace to him and to his prejudices. But respecting my son. Nature caught at this hope, that this secretary of the Duke of —, of a nobleman, might prove to be my long lost boy. I traced his story back to the service of my Lord — that is, of another nobleman, and from thence to Cambridge. I travelled thither, and spent a whole week in vain enquiries, for he had lived recluse and without friends. At length I found an old gentleman, who related his history back to his coming from New York, under the care of a clergyman. This confirmed my hopes beyond all doubt, and I returned to London, determined to make myself known to him, and learn his history from his own lips."

*W. Elmer.*

*W. Elmer.* "I think I should have done so at first. It seems a more natural way, and at any rate a shorter voyage, then tacking about to Cambridge and back."

*Mortimer.* "But there were particular circumstances, my good friend, very singular combinations indeed, that prevented my doing so."

*W. Elmer.* "Mayhap so—mayhap so; you should know best; you was always reckoned clever; and I, you know, never took a vast liking to study. So here's your health, my old friend, I must shove off. We may meet to-morrow."

*Mortimer.* "True—you are going then to Lord Latimore's—true. Pray,

Pray, if it is not a secret, may I ask, what business *you* can have there?"

*W. Elmer.* "Why, look ye, it is a secret."

*Mortimer.* "It is a secret! Is it any thing about a lady, my dear fellow!"

*W. Elmer.* "Fie, fie, Sidney; I thought you were a man of honour! I have not asked you why you go in this disguise; perhaps that's a secret. In God's name keep it for me. I am not curious about other people's business, but when I do undertake, I will be faithful to my trust; I will keep my promise to a dying fellow creature."

*Mortimer (with great earnestness).* "Dying!—Oh God, is she then dead?"

*W. Elmer,*

*W. Elmer.* "*She*—I don't understand you. It was an unfortunate shipwrecked man I speak of."

*Mortimer.* "A man shipwrecked! Oh, it was a man who entrusted you with a secret for Lord Latimore."

*W. Elmer.* "Yes, sir, it was. Why are you so anxious about it? I have it safe here (taking out his bottle from his jacket), and damme if any soul, dead or alive, *unclinches* this hand till I give the bottle to my Lord."

*Mortimer.* "Eh—what? Then the secret is in that bottle."

*W. Elmer.* "Yes—let me be sure though (looking at the seal on the cork). No, damme, that is not it. That holds

holds poor brother Ned's letters to me about family matters;—one from him when he was at New York." Then taking out another bottle from his other side-pocket, "Aye, this is poor Bob-Clare's."

A thought like lightning flashed across Mortimer; he followed it up, and learnt from his brother in law, the same tale which he afterwards related to the Earl.

Fired with a zealous desire to obtain the papers of Beauclair, which he felt convinced contained all the particulars of Oceana's story, Mortimer on this occasion descended to a trick.

He professed great anxiety to look over his deceased kinsman's letter from

from New York, and as the two bottles stood on the table, marked distinctly by his eye which contained Beauclair's.

A clock in the room struck eleven.—Mortimer started up, and taking the candle in one hand, and Beauclair's bottle in the other, exclaimed—

"You will get no admittance at Latimore House, unless you make haste.—Come, I'll shew it you. I'll put this bottle of poor Edward's in my pocket, and will meet you here again in the morning, and return it."

The unsuspecting Elmer clenched fast hold of the other bottle, and sallied forth with all the zeal and fidelity

ty of a British sailor. Mortimer left him at the outer gate of Latimore House, with a repetition of his promise to meet him the next morning at the same coffee-house.

CHAP.

## CHAP. IX.

### *A British Hero.*

WITH a hurried step the perpetrator of this new species of *Mail Robbery* reached Derrington House, where he had appointed the Marquis of Leverton and Captain Melville to meet him, to learn the result of his stratagem. He was so exhausted with speed, and trembled so much from the danger of being pursued, that when he entered the study, the Captain and the Marquis were alarmed at his appearance.

"My plan has been defeated," said Mor-

Mortimer, "by their bringing Latimore himself to me, instead of my son. I have, however, spoken to him. I am convinced he is my child. God grant he may not yet be so lost to virtue as to make me receive him with a curse instead of a blessing. He is not a hardened villain, I am sure, from his emotion. I found means to give him the letter, and I—I—think he will be here to-night."

"But, dear sir," said Captain Melville, "Oceana—you forget our feelings in your own. Have you gained no glimpse of intelligence?"

"I think I have," said Mortimer.

"Oh, do not keep us on the rack. Is there any hope?" exclaimed the Marquis, whose love for Oceana

was increased by every day of her absence.

"Have patience. You will find," said Mortimer, "that the intelligence which I could not gain by artifice, I have obtained by fraud."

"Fraud!" exclaimed both his auditors.

"Even so," said he, "Pray did you ever hear the name of Beauclair?"

"Is it he—the scoundrel?" cried the Marquis.

"He was the De l' Epeé," said Mortimer; "for when Latimore came into the room, where I stood with my back to the door, he addressed me as Beauclair, and said something of the "Girl," which

which I did not hear, for as he caught a glimpse of my reflected face in a looking-glass, Conscience, with her iron scourge, smote him to madness; he ran away like a terrified lunatic, and fainted in the presence of his family. I made my escape, having first said a few words to Elmer."

"But why, why did you not conceal your face, good Mortimer, until the villain had said more?" said the Marquis.

"I did not expect his entrance," replied Mortimer. "I had expressly asked for Elmer. But who is this Beauclair?"

"As infamous a villain as ever lived," said the Marquis. "A wretch whose name is a reproach. He has assumed all

all characters and shapes. As a Count, a Priest, a Soldier, and a Student, he has committed the most daring depredations in various parts of England.—He is a Neapolitan by birth, and has only of late assumed the name of Beauclair. Latimore could not have chosen a wretch more fit for his diabolical services."

"Well," said Mortimer, "the hand of Providence has ended his career of vice. He is no more"

Here Mortimer related the adventure with his brother-in-law, and produced the bottle.

"*When Treason's in the State,*" continued he, "*Wax gives way.*" So saying, he demolished the brittle envelope of these important dispatches, and two letters

letters dropped on the floor. One was directed to the Earl of Latimore, and the other to the Chevalier Montucci. The latter was written in cypher, and of course unintelligible.

"This," said Mortimer, taking the first in his hand, "is most probably the key to the other. It is in Italian. I'll read it to you in English."

*On board the Resolution Cutter, at Sea, March 31st, at night.*

"My Lord,

"Human power must bend to that Omnipotence, whatever we may call it, which has the operation of all the elements of nature at its controul. Since dark a storm has risen, which threatens the destruction of this vessel, and of course the loss of all our lives,

lives, as if it continues, no boat can live in such a sea, and our hold is fast filling with water. Under these apprehensions I fulfil my last duty to you in stating a few particulars, but from the nature of my situation they must be imperfect. From the return of the carriage you learnt our complete success till we were embarked on board the Resolution.—Halloran, the commander of the cutter, is exactly the man for our purpose, and the whole crew are as much under his subjection as if he were actually Paul Jones, whose manners and dress he imitates. I own my heart relents at the distress of your victim more than it has ever done before. No words can express her agonies. We have no other female on board, except Halloran's Mistress, who is a Flemish woman of the roughest cast I ever saw. She is the attendant of Miss Melville, who has

has never suffered herself to be undressed during these eight days that we have been beating against contrary winds—

* * * * * * * *

"The violence of the storm increases, the most dreadful thunder peals burst over our heads. I have been questioning Halloran about our situation. He dreads our being driven on the Yarmouth coast. Indeed, my Lord, I had rather the vessel should sink, than by such an accident a discovery should take place. I am called on deck.

* * * * * * * *

"We must inevitably perish. I have received a violent contusion on my head, by the falling of the mast. Miss Melville revives as the certainty of death

death approaches. She prays loudly "that God may restore peace to her father and her friends; adores him for this merciful deliverance from her enemies, and triumphs in the hope that she shall soon meet her mother in Heaven."—Alas! alas! I cannot so pray. Oh, surely, surely the agent that rules these storms must be——

* * * * * * * * *

"By the flashes of lightning a ship has been discovered, which from its size is supposed to be a man of war. The crew of our vessel insist on firing signals of distress. Halloran has shot dead one man who attempted it: the rest have risen on their commander.

"Our

* * * * * * * *

" Our helm is lost,—we are tossing at the sport of the waves! I will take care the girl does not escape to trouble you. I shall seal up this paper, and the letters I was to have delivered on reaching our destination, in a bottle, and sling it round my neck. If I sink it shall sink with me. If I survive, and can ensure its safe delivery——"

Here the letter broke off abruptly, and from the accounts of William Elmer, Mortimer filled up the chasm.

The melancholy conclusion forced upon them was that Oceana had perished. The workings of despair were loud in Captain Melville, who swore revenge on Latimore.

The

The Marquis, who saw an everlasting cloud thus rest upon his hopes, trembled with a cold emotion at his heart, clasped his hands together in mute despair, and rested his head against the chimney-piece. Mortimer mingled with the horror of this discovery, the remembrance of his son's connivance at the dreadful plot, and was still more agonized than either.

The triumph of despair was here complete, but its duration was merely momentary. The Angel of Providence, commissioned with auxiliaries for vanquished hope, arrived at the moment of her fall, and the worst foe of man scouled and retreated at the fluttering of Hope's renovated pinions. The visible means employed for the accomplishment of this

celestial purpose, were the loud and repeated knocking heard at the study door.

"Is Captain Melville here? Is Captain Melville here?" was echoed in a bold tone of importance that seemed to justify the intrusion. A servant appeared, followed by an old veteran sailor, who, the moment he beheld Captain Melville, fell at his knees, and embraced his hands.

"Thank God, thank God, I've found my noble captain at last. Miss Oceana is safe and sound—safe and sound, my noble captain, and I have lived to bring the happy tidings."

"Jerry Falkland—old Jerry Falkland, who sailed with me the first voyage in the Lion!"

"Aye,

"Aye, Captain, the same, and the Lion man of war will be more dear to you than ever, for it has saved the life of your daughter."

"Is it possible! Is it possible!—Explain, my good old Jerry, explain."

"Here's a letter from brave Captain Latimore, the Lion's gallant commander, that will do it better than I can."

"Captain Latimore!" exclaimed Melville, as he broke the seal. "Does he command her now?"

'Aye, Captain, and by G—, your honour need not wish the gallant vessel in the hands of a braver sailor, or a better-hearted commander."

Melville read the letter aloud.

*Yarmouth, April 1st.*

"DEAR SIR,

"The fleet on this station encountered last night the severest storm I ever witnessed. I shall however deem it the most fortunate incident of my life, since it has impressed upon my heart the indelible satisfaction of having been instrumental in saving the life of a fellow creature. This alone would have been an ample reward for the risk of my own, but Providence had so ordained it, that in addition to that gratification, so welcome to the general feelings of humanity, I should enjoy the individual pleasure of meeting in the person I had saved the lost daughter of one of the bravest and

and worthiest of men I know—the lovely and amiable Miss Melville. The situation in which I found her was so critical, and her deliverance so singular, that though I can assure you, she will soon be in your arms, the same child which you had lost in every respect, excepting the consequences of fatigue and distress, yet nothing that has occurred throws the least glimmering of light on the authors of so daring an outrage. The Lion, which I have the honour to command, was driven from her anchor, and having sustained considerable damage from the storm, was making into port, when by the flashes of lightning we perceived the hull of a small vessel, with not more than a yard of mast standing, drifting at a small distance from the Lion. The storm had abated, and the smooth surface

of

of the ocean was continually illumined by the incessant flashes of lightning. As we approached nearer, we had a more distinct view, and from the clear deck and perfect silence on board the hull, we congratulated ourselves that the crew had escaped, as we saw she was sinking very fast. But imagine, if possible, the horror that I felt when, as we came nearly alongside her, I saw distinctly the motion of a human figure, as if struggling to extricate itself from the remaining piece of the mast. One impulse actuated every heart; our long boat was instantly manned, and I found myself in a few minutes close to the sinking hull; which was now nearly level with the water's edge. "It's alive, it's alive," cried one seaman.—"Speak, speak, if we can save you," said another, jumping on the deck.—"Lord have

have mercy on us," continued the intrepid fellow, "it's a boy. He is alive, but his legs are tied to the mast, I can't unloose them. A knife, a knife: we sink apace."—"Jerry, come back—jump, jump; the boat must row off, by G—," cried the man at the rudder, "or she will be drawn into the eddy. Pull away, pull away!" "Oh if I had but a knife," hallooed he, "a knife would save him. Poor boy, I must leave him; our feet are under water." I will not attempt to describe what passed in my mind in this short interval. I did not dare to risk the lives of ten men to save one, by ordering the boat to stop in opposition to the steersman, but I felt that I might risk my own, and without speaking a word to the crew, I snatched a knife from one of them, leaped into the sea, and swam to the wreck,

wreck, which by this time was several yards off. Old Jerry and myself extricated the supposed boy, and bore him safely to the boat. We gained the Lion amidst the huzzas of the crew, just as the wreck disappeared for ever; and when I had leisure to examine the fellow creature I had assisted in preserving, I instantly recollected the dress, conveyed the poor sufferer to my cabin, and in her rapture at finding herself under my protection, was ten thousand times more than remunerated. The wretch who forced her from your protection, sailed with her in this vessel, and she imagines intended to convey her to some distant shore. The contrary winds which have so providentially prevailed this week, had kept them on our coast, and the storm of last night was the means of their destruction,

and

and her deliverance. The wretch who had perpetrated the outrage, determined she should not escape to expose him, had, with the soul of a savage, tied her tender limbs to the broken mast, and with the rest of the crew then took to their boat as a desperate effort for their own preservation. In a few minutes, however, she saw them ingulphed in the ocean, and has every reason to think none of them were preserved, though a boat was in sight when they perished. The mail from this place is now waiting at my request, for the bearer of this, who was the deliverer of your child, and who, it appears, has a personal knowledge of you. These circumstances induce me to send by him the happy tidings, that I shall instantly follow him with your daughter, as rapidly as her exhausted strength per-

mits, and that I will not quit her till I have placed her under your protection.

" EDWARD LATIMORE."

" Noble, noble Latimore ! Thou hast more than retrieved the honour of the name," exclaimed Mortimer.

" Happy, happy Latimore !" murmured the Marquis, in an inaudible voice, " how do I envy thee !—Well may he say her rapture at finding herself under his protection, more than a thousand times remunerates him. Had I ten thousand lives I'd risk them all for her."

" Righteous Providence!" exclaimed Captain Melville, falling on his knees, " receive

"receive my grateful thanks; and you, oh noble, truly noble fellow, how can I reward you?"

"Lord love your honour—reward! An't you happy? An't Miss alive? And you talk to old Jerry as if he wanted any more reward."

"Well well, Jerry, we'll talk of that hereafter; but how did you find me?" said the Captain.

"I was directed to go to a grand hotel there, by the Prince of Wales's House, and so then they told me that your house was likely to be here."

"And Captain Latimore will drive thither then?"

"No no, your honour; he bid me say, as how he hoped to meet you by twelve

twelve o'clock to-morrow noon, at his brother's house."

"At Lord Latimore's?" exclaimed Mortimer.

"So he said, sir," replied Jerry.

"Well then, my friends, we must take measures accordingly," said Mortimer. "Let this noble fellow remain here to-night. But, Jerry, do not mention this news to any of the servants."

Jerry bowed and retired, conducted by his veteran master.

"It is too late to take any steps to-night," continued Mortimer to the Marquis, "unless it were to send a courier to your noble uncle, at Salt-hill. And that, I think, had better be deferred

deferred till the morning, as perhaps something may result from the interview I momentarily expect with my son. I, with all my heart, rejoice in this recovery of the object of all our loves; but until this anxious heart knows the integrity of another heart —till it beats against the bosom of a virtuous son, Mortimer's must be a mixed imperfect joy. I think he will not fail to come: I will change this dress, and prepare myself to receive him."

CHAP.

## CHAP. X.

### *An Avowal.*

WITH spirits little suited to the bold tone which Latimore had instructed him to assume, Elmer left his patron, and soon found himself at the door in Park-lane, where he was to give the signal. He hesitated—he lingered some minutes ere he could summon sufficient resolution to knock, as he had been directed. No sooner had he done so, than the gate flew open, and a voice enquired—"Who comes there." It was too dark to distinguish the person of the enquirer. Elmer answered,

answered, "Mortimer." "Do you see a light at the end of the colonnade?" —"Yes."—Walk towards it; it is a lantern: take it in your hand, and proceed straight along the garden wall; you will be accosted at the end of it by a person who will conduct you to where you are expected."

Elmer thought this a strange proceeding, but, as he was embarked in the adventure, he followed the directions.

He had nearly reached the extremity of the wall, when he heard the sound of footsteps. He stopped. "Who comes there?" said a voice. "Mortimer." "You may come on," replied the voice—"follow me."

He followed his conductor, who had

had the keys of various apartments, until they arrived at a door, against which his guide told him to tap with his hand, and then retired.

These midnight visits, and back-stairs entrances were not entirely new to Elmer, who, in the part he had lately performed in the drama of *Ins and Outs*, had rehearsed scenes not wholly dissimilar to the present, yet on no occasion had he ever experienced sensations such as now caused his whole frame to tremble. He tapped gently at the door. It was opened by the person, whom he had known as Spallanzani, and suspected to be Mortimer. He now appeared in the plain, neat dress of an English Gentleman; he seemed wholly unembarrassed in his manners, and without one trace of that anxiety he had hitherto

therto evinced: Elmer drew back, as if uncertain whether the person he saw, was or was not the same who had so earnestly desired his attendance.

"You are surprised at the alteration of my habit, I perceive. The alien Spallanzani, you see, Mr. Elmer, is metamorphosed into a plain Englishman; a character he might have assumed, when he received your intimation to quit the soil which gave him birth. There were, however, reasons why that explanation was deferred to the present opportunity, which, if you will be seated, sir, and have patience to listen to them, shall be now laid before you."

"You have taken me, sir, by surprise," said Elmer, "and I must add, I think unfairly so! The transaction to

to which you allude was an act of public duty, of which it is not possible in a clandestine interview of this nature, to speak at all. I must, therefore, beg to premise, that in according to your pressing solicitation for this meeting, I do not expect that I shall be insulted by any confidence on your part, that has for its basis a compromise of my duty to the Duke of —, or of my allegiance to the Earl of Latimore."

"I assure you, sir," said Mortimer, with a placid smile, "that the motives which induced me to solicit this interview, are of the purest nature, and such as I apprehend may be completely answered, without any breach of public duty or private friendship."

"On that assurance, sir, I sit down."

A short

A short silence ensued.

"You may, perhaps, be surprised, sir," said Mortimer, "that this interview would take place here in the apartments of the Marquis of Leverton?"

"By no means—I am not ignorant of the devotedness of the Marquis to his uncle Lord William, and therefore cannot be surprised that his apartments should be occupied by his uncle's friend. There is a circumstance, however, which I must be frank enough to observe does surprise me. When I saw you at Latimore House, your words and manner evinced the utmost anxiety for the fate of a young lady; she, I mean, who was so strangely carried off from the Duchess of Derrington's."

"O, Miss

"O, Miss Melville, you mean," said Mortimer, coolly.

"The same," replied Elmer. "I confess I am surprised at your present coolness and indifference on a subject, which at that time apparently affected you so much, as to throw you off your guard, and induce you to let fall insinuations of a suspicion, the most uncharitable."

"Did it really—I dare say I was to blame. But be it as it may, all my anxiety on her account is at an end. I am now perfectly easy respecting Miss Melville."

"Are you indeed? Is she then safe? Is she preserved? Is she returned?" exclaimed Elmer with eagerness and warmth.

"How

"How now, sir, surely *you are not so much affected, as to be thrown off your guard?* Yet your warmth on a subject, which *ought* not so much to interest you, might induce suspicions in spite of charity."

Elmer's face glowed with the heat of fire, and was tinted of the deepest crimson. He rose from his chair, unconscious that he did so; sat down again—bit his lips, and betrayed all the symptoms of detected guilt.

Mortimer folded his arms, threw himself back in his chair, and affected to sit more than ever at his ease. Elmer had nearly recovered from his confusion, when Mortimer, with seeming disregard of him, observed—

"The wind blows a hurricane. I am

am sorry to learn that there has been very considerable damage done at sea by the late storms."

"Storm!—What, sir, did you say a storm?"

"Yes, sir! Is there any thing marvellous in a storm during the equinox? I have a friend on board the Valiant, on the North-sea station, who writes me word—"

"Valiant!—On board the Valiant! North-sea—Storm:—oh, for God's sake, torture me no longer. You have heard of her—you have discovered every thing. It was infamous, I own it, but kill me at once, and do not rack me on this torture of suspense."

"I will

"I will not torture you, young man," said Mortimer, mingled with dignity and tenderness, "guilty as you are. The British laws disdain to torture even the murderer; and a Briton ought equally to disdain the office of a Torturer. Receive the blow then—*Oceana Melville will soon be restored to the arms of her father, as the vile assassins, who planned the desperate outrage, are known!*"

"Oh God!—No, no, no!—Not *known;* do not say *known;* let them be *slain,* they merit it, but not *known.* I say, strangle us in private, but do not let the world point at our graves in scorn."

Tears started in the eyes of Mortimer; they burst the restraint his manly spirit struggled to enforce upon

on them, and rolled copiously down his cheek. He averted his face from Elmer, who stood with his hands clenched together, and lifted to his forehead, a mute and motionless statue of Remorse!

After a few minutes pause, Mortimer, with his head still averted, said, "Sit down, sit down; I have much more to say to you. I did not ask this interview only to afflict you. If the finger of Justice has probed your festering wound, now let the hand of Mercy pour in the healing balm."

"Oh, sir, I deserve no mercy!"

"Mercy is not of a quality that can be merited. The object of clemency is the criminal whom Justice has stripped bare of every plea, and Mercy itself is a celestial

a celestial shield which interposes between the uplifted sword of Justice and her prostrate victims! Just such a victim is Elmer at this moment, and that same shield of Mercy these trembling hands extend o'er his devoted head.—Say then, youth, will you receive the proffered refuge? Shall this heart of mine that throbs, that pants to press thee, penitent, to my breast, say, shall it know such bliss?"

"Penitent! Yes, Heaven knows how penitent! Ere I beheld you this day, my heart revolted at the part I had sustained in an outrage, to which nothing, I think, but the infatuation of madness could have driven me. Already have I proclaimed my penitence to my——what shall I call him—to Lord Latimore."

"Have you indeed?" interrupted Mortimer. "And have you with the zeal of genuine penitence renounced his guilty service? Then welcome, welcome to these arms."

"Yet hold," said Elmer, retreating from the offered embrace. "However powerful the impulse that I feel to fly into the arms which you throw open to me, and it is the strongest feeling which I ever have experienced, still let me not forget, that though your worth were even greater than I deem it, and my humiliating guilt yet more humiliating, both which are impossible, still, sir, still must I ever shrink from an embrace with you!"

"Horrible prophecy!" exclaimed Mortimer, clasping his hands together.

gether. "Righteous Providence, avert its dreadful sentence!" Then turning to Elmer,—"What is this insuperable barrier between hearts that ought—I say, what is this obstacle?"

"The will of Fate," said Elmer, "whose blind decrees have forged for me fetters that I cannot break—chains in which the destinies of Elmer and of Latimore form alternate links. Can you wonder now?"

"I wonder more than ever! Surely it cannot be. Imagination sickens at the bare idea. Latimore would never voluntarily let the secret escape his lips. Why should he? For what end, or purpose should he blacken his own fame? And if imperious necessity should even have compelled him to become his own accuser, what most

 miraculous

miraculous conjunction of events must have been woven to form a woof of fate so singularly horrible as that the confidant he chose should be the—Tell me, sir; have you ever heard the tale of Mortimer? Do you know his injuries, and the load of infamy that Latimore has heaped upon this head? Do you know the wrongs of Derrington, and of Olivia?"

"I know them all."

"And knowing them, does your callous heart still cleave to the Dæmon that with worse than dæmoniac malice, with more than devil's hate, has thus through a long course of years pursued and persecuted innocence, that might vie with angels' purity, and worth exalted as mankind e'er saw? Do you still cling to Latimore?"

"He

"He is my master; I have ate his bread. He has raised me to the rank of friend. He has poured every secret of his soul into my breast, and can I then abandon him?"

"He is a murderer! Can you keep fellowship with one whose hands are stained with human blood?"

"I know—he—aimed—a deadly blow, but do I not behold in you the living evidence that acquits him of so foul a crime?"

"No. He raised his hand with murderous intent, and in the sight of Heaven is as much the murderer, as if the blow he aimed had really slaughtered. Does he not himself believe me dead? How then will he face me in the dread assembly of an English Court of Justice?

tice? How will the towering spirit of Latimore himself cower before the awe and majesty of Equal Laws, which hurl the boldest and the proudest perpetrator of an injury beneath the level of the meanest injured?"

"I dare not trust myself to the extent of such a thought. You know not Latimore if you suppose he e'er would stand arraigned a criminal. Rather than meet that hour, he would lay waste the world, if the alternative were left to him. Then let me warn you of your danger, sir; you cannot form the remotest estimate of the extent of his power, or the activity of his agents."

"I know him well. I am aware no crime, however horrible to other natures, would prove a barrier to any purpose

purpose formed in his dark soul.—When he shall hear that Mortimer survived the blow, which he, assassin-like, aimed at his heart, he will not with the impulse of humanity rejoice:—No, those baleful passions, which first begat the murderous resolution in his breast, nurtured it there, till time and opportunity matured it to a deed, and then invigorated the daring hand of homicide; those same malignant passions—that dire hate—that proud revenge, will never cease to busy his distracted brain for means of extirpating Mortimer, till o'er the lifeless corse of me or him the earth for ever closes."

"Forbid it, gracious God!" exclaimed Elmer. "Oh why should it be so? Fly then to some distant corner of the earth, and still be dead to

Latimore

Latimore. The hideous passions you have named shed o'er his better qualities a dark and sable cloud, 'tis true; but virtue's influence and returning reason may yet dispel these murky vapours, and from its present gloom the noble soul of Latimore may hereafter burst more brilliant, than had it never been obscured."

"The wish, at least, does honour to your heart, young man. I cannot tell you in how great degree it gladdens me, to see a youth, schooled for so long a period, under such a tutor, evince such generous feelings."

"In pity, sir, call not attention back to such a thing as I am. Compare not me with Latimore. In him ambition's crimes are softened down, and

and shaded by his brilliant talents, and his vast attainments; and had he even been exhibited to vulgar gaze as a detected murderer, the multitude had rather wept than mocked him. Not so is it with me. What palliating plea can I advance for parting with integrity—for hatching and disseminating slanderous lies, to transplant honest men from office? Or for conniving at the horrid outrage that bore a daughter from a father's fond protection, and doomed her to a life of thraldom in a foreign land?—Who will enquire beyond the superfices of the fact, that one Elmer was the Great Man's tool, and while the tear of pity mingles with the voice of censure in the tale of Latimore, one general feeling of disgust shall shout the infamy of Elmer."

The firmness of Mortimer was shaken, and the convulsion of his features betrayed the emotions of his heart. He took the hand of Elmer, and pressing it, said—

"You judge yourself severely.—Think not I mean to flatter you. You have, beyond all doubt, been driven wide away from honour's path, yet in this voluntary return you make amends. I am no stranger to your situation."

"Return! alas, sir, still you know me not; you cannot even have a conception of my hazardous position.—When first I knew Lord Latimore my heart was free from guile as is the new-born babe's. Accident made me useful to him. My employment placed me near his person, and often in his presence. His wondrous talents, the

the grandeur of his ideas, the compass of his reasonings, raised him to the standard of a deity in my opinion, while every day and hour some new testimony of his favour sunk upon my heart. To the ties of admiration and gratitude a third was added, when I knew his story, much more powerful than either. These united, have formed within my breast a feeling no language can describe.—Stronger than pity far, yet infinitely more respectful; its gradual influence has been to interweave the destiny of my patron with my own, so that I am persuaded were the perpetration of another murder, the only mode of warding off disgrace from Latimore, such was, nay, believe me, such is the nature of that interest I feel for him, I should not hesitate to be the murderer."

"Oh

"Oh do not utter such horrid words: you know not what you say."

"Be not deceived, sir; 'tis not the sudden impulse of a fleeting passion that has unslipped from caution's trammel a rebellious tongue. No, Mortimer, no; my lips have simply given utterance to the firm, immoveable determination of a heart that beats for Latimore alone."

"Infatuation—dreadful infatuation."

"Call it by what name you will. I am instructed to use no more disguise with you. Know then, that Latimore shudders at the mere possibility of Mortimer's existence. You can as well comprehend the causes of his dread as I can explain them. Were

he

he to meet your gaze, no basilisk's could prove more certain death. He hates, he loathes you."

"Need Mortimer be told of this? But you have said you were instructed, sir. Does he then know of this our meeting?"

"There is no movement of my soul that is concealed from him. He is to me more than myself, or rather I have no self, but Latimore exists in me. To prop the hollow reputation of his name, I have annihilated all nature's springs and motions in my heart. His triumph o'er his foes; the preservation of his splendid character, is now the only vivid principle within me. These objects are the only deities I serve; to them I consecrate my powers, my principles,

ciples, my passions; nay, on their altar do I immolate my soul's eternal hopes."

"Horrid! horrid! horrid!" exclaimed Mortimer, with the strongest emotions of despair. "Thou lost, lost wretch! What shall I say to thee? Blasphemer! Parricide! Yes, Parricide, I say. Monster, behold in me a FATHER! Well mayest thou tremble; well may all horrors, dreadful to human sight and thought, make hideous thy countenance. Go, go to Latimore.—Go, ask for the sword smeared with thy father's blood. Then hie thee hither quickly, and in a parent's life-blood come imbrue thy hands; pluck this heart, thy fa—ther's heart, and bear it as the seal of thy infernal friendship with a dæmon."

Elmer

Elmer stood motionless. His eyes were glassy, and fixed upon his agonised father; his hair stood erect; his hands were clenched, and he drew his breath in the painful and quick manner of one expiring in convulsions.—Not a word spoke his horrible surprise; not a tear told how his heart-strings were strained. His limbs failed him, and with a loud groan he sunk senseless on the floor!

"Help! help!" shrieked Mortimer, opening the study door. "Help, help, there, help!"

The Marquis of Leverton and Captain Melville, who were in an adjoining room, rushed into the study, and discovered the distracted Mortimer upon the floor, bending in agony over the convulsed frame of his son.

"I have

"I have murdered him! I have murdered him!" exclaimed Mortimer. "My boy! my boy! live but to pronounce my pardon."

The Captain attempted to reason with the wretched father, while the more active Marquis ran to order medical assistance.

In a few minutes nature overcame the violent shock it had sustained.—The convulsive heaving of the breath ceased, and a flood of tears succeeded. When Elmer first raised his eyes, they glanced on Mortimer, who was kneeling by his side, and holding his hand, affectionately pressed to his lips. With an effort he raised himself also on his knees, and while tears still trickled down his cheeks, with a look expressive of the workings of his

his soul, he uttered the monosyllable, "Father," in a tone of voice that spoke volumes to the comprehensive, feeling mind of Mortimer.

"He lives! My son, my son," cried Mortimer in extacy, and clasped him to his breast. "O, hour of joy," continued he, "I clasp my child, my long lost Edward to my breast. He lives and loves me."

At that moment Captain Melville struck the sight of Elmer. As if a flash of lightning had blasted him, he fell at his full length upon the floor, exclaiming—"Hide me, oh, in mercy, hide me from his power: it destroys me."

Both Mortimer and the Captain strove by the tenderest expressions to

to calm his agitated mind. "Look up, look up, poor soul," said Melville. "'Tis Latimore alone is guilty."

"Am not I the agent of his guilt? Oh do not then profane the charities of your nature, sir, by such ill-bestowed compassion. Will not our crimes conjointly be proclaimed? Will not infamy descend upon us both? One common ruin will overwhelm the master and the servant, and one eternal monument perpetuate our crimes."

"Thanks to a good Providence," said Captain Melville, "the crime has been defeated, and if it be not the fault of Latimore himself, his name may yet descend unsullied to posterity, and we may all be happy. Instead of unavailing sorrow for the past,

past, young man, evince your genuine repentance by a zeal to bring about that reconciliation, which Providence perhaps placed you in the situation you hold, for the very purpose of effecting."

Mortimer joined in this charitable sentiment, and upon the return of the Marquis such further explanations and instructions were on all sides afforded, as caused the mind of Elmer gradually to admit the hope, that the proud spirit of his patron might possibly bend to circumstances, and every barrier to the general happiness thus be removed. With this faint hope, amidst a host of apprehensions, he left his new allies, and once more returned to Latimore, with written overtures of *a general oblivion* of the past, signed by Mortimer, the Captain,

Captain, and the Marquis, who pledged himself for the signature of Lord William Derrington.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XI.

*The Mask of Peace.*

BEFORE Elmer reached the presence of the Earl, the courier, who had been dispatched to Greenwich, had returned with the unsuccessful tidings, that the sailor had not been home, nor was expected till the following day. This intelligence Latimore imparted to his Secretary, as soon as he entered the chamber.

"It matters not, my Lord," said Elmer,

Elmer. "The important interview just passed, has left us nothing more to learn."

"How now—what ails you, man? By your visage, I perceive, it was an honest ghost I saw. Is it one of flesh and blood, or of that aerial substance, that my sword can penetrate it not? In brief, sir, does Mortimer tread this earth, or was it his floating likeness in the air that blasted me?"

"Mortimer—Mortimer lives!"

'Indeed!" cried the Earl, his breast expanding. "Well, so does Latimore. What else? What was his errand here?"

"A most gracious one, my Lord.—He came to bestow his unasked forgiveness,

giveness, and to court a reconciliation."

"Ha—ha—ha," uttered Latimore, in a convulsive laugh. "*Reconciliation!* Ha—ha—ha. Thou dolt, thou fool! Hear me, recording Spirits: When winter's ice shall float in summer's streams; when rains shall scorch, and lightning's fires shall refresh earth's verdure; when the pale borrowed light of Hecate shall eclipse its source, the Sun; or when the axis of this globe shall snap, and in the centre North and South embrace; then—no, not then will I be reconciled to the thing I hate—I loathe."

As he spoke his teeth gnashed horribly, and he stamped his foot as in the act of trampling on something most odious and hateful.

Elmer

Elmer clasped his hands despondingly, and heaved a deep-drawn sigh.

"Why that desponding face and air?" said Latimore. "Have you told all, or is there yet to come something to sanction such a coward countenance as that? Heard you aught of the girl—of Beauclair—of the means by which this Mortimer escaped the death this arm designed him, or any other tidings?"

"Oh much, much more, my Lord; so much that I indulged visions of happiness, which the rooted hatred you have breathed has changed to scenes of horror."

"What is it that you dread so much? Is it for me or for my enemies you fear? If I am the object of your kind apprehensions, pr'ythee discard your tender

tender fears for me. Let the dwarf phalanx come. The virtuous Derrington, and this mighty Mortimer, united with the father Melville, and the lover Leverton, inspire in this breast no more of awe or terror, than feels the adamantine rock, which rears its dauntless head in scorn of ocean's loudest rage, when from a little bird of passage a downy feather falls, and the air wafts it towards its flinty bosom. Sir, I would crush the utmost efforts of their united power and wisdom with a thought. There is no word in usage among men that can convey to you a just perception of the contemptuous, the derisive feelings, which the hostility of such a pigmy host excites within my breast. Away with apprehensions then, and let me know the worst."

No alternative now presented itself to Elmer, and in the best manner the agitation of his mind permitted him, he disclosed every circumstance.

The strong emotions of Latimore's mind burst forth occasionally as Elmer impressed on it the important facts, that Oceana was Olivia's daughter, and the child of Lord William Derrington; and that he himself had found a father in the arch-foe of his patron, Mortimer. When he concluded, Latimore exclaimed—

"Why this is marvellous indeed!—A chain of wonders! You the son of Mortimer; you, whom chance recommended to my notice, and whom Fate made my confidant;—you the son of Mortimer! Again, she, whom chance brought into the neighbourhood

hood of my sisters, and whom Fate ordained should catch my sleeping exclamations; she the daughter of Olivia and Derrington! Why the Fates now work indeed, and their operations are worth the regard of Latimore. When did you propose to return my answer, sir, to these overtures?"

"As early after day-break as possible, since it is probable that Captain Latimore and his charge may arrive here very early."

"There was another stroke of Fate, that he, my brother, should through my own interest, at a sudden notice, take the command on that very station, as if on purpose to save the victim of my jealousy, and return her here to blast my reputation with her evidence. These coincidencies form

a woof of fate, the threads of which I must unravel instantly.

"You may retire, I would be alone. When I shall have resolved upon a course of action suited to the dignity and bearing of my nature, you shall be informed."

"May the spirits of Humanity and Love direct your resolution to the paths of peace," said Elmer, and withdrew.

Alone, thus Latimore murmured out his feelings:—

"Humanity! Love! Paths of Peace! Said he not so? Let him go seek them, they are the boons of Fate to mole-eyed grovelling men, who amble round the circle marked out by

by compasses of moderation. Beyond the limits of that circle there are no paths of peace; and he who dare obtain the glory of separation from the vulgar throng must on that glory live. 'Tis food, meet only for the children of distinguished birth, whose souls are sparks of lustrous Jupiter, emitted from their refulgent source to kindle in a mould of clay the fires of divinity.—These stimulate a man to deeds so far removed in altitude and compass from the ploddings of the common herd, that he is worshipped as a deity, or as a devil dreaded. What then am I? I have outstepped their circle; I am born of Jupiter. I feel within me all the light and energies peculiar to my birth. I sought a name that might have dimmed the lustre of all ancient constellations by its glory. What

will

will it be? Spirit of him, who first instructed me to open the mysterious Urn of Destiny, Julian of Rosenbergh, arise, and aid me to explore the meaning of the Fates in such a combination of events, and such a chaos of ambiguous aspects, as now torment me."

Here Latimore paused, and drawing forth his horoscope, placed it on a table, and stood some time silently contemplating it:—then raising his hand hastily to his forehead—"By all the powers of the malignant, but it answers," exclaimed he. "This *is* the forty-fifth year from my birth. Julian, thou wert too true an oracle:—Yes, yes, it gathers round me now; now the dark shades are weaving in my destiny. Oh, shall it be a shade—a passing gloom? or is the cloud more

more black than total darkness, which is fast moving hither, the bearer of that destruction which old Julian threatened? How shall I avert it? Mortimer and Elmer; Derrington and the offspring of Olivia! Ah, there, there lies the mischief. "*The evil threatened lies near Olivia*," said Julian, and now, in the image of herself, the person of her child, that evil comes."

His brain grew giddy with the rapid whirl of painful thoughts, and the dark passions of his soul now rose to action. Revenge now held a blazing torch to Memory, and threw a blood-red light on scenes where Mortimer and Derrington had triumphed over Latimore.—Next Hate exhibited a mirror to his mind, in which he saw Elmer, the confidant of his breast, embrace with filial love, the creature that

that he loathed; and then Ambition blew a loud alarum in his ears, that danger in the resurrection of his foes approached the tower of his greatness. At one moment his lofty soul upbraided him with cowardice, in submitting to the suggestions of a pretended reconciliation, and the next, Revenge and Hate gloried in the mean stratagem, that might secure their victims. The meaner passions triumphed in the end. There seemed no armour suited to ambition, nor was there any combatant actually in arms against it! But Revenge and Hate beheld their victims, and all the self-command of Latimore was requisite to repress their rage. Hate would perhaps have rushed with eagerness upon its prey, and murdered Mortimer, had not Revenge pointed to a more distant object in Oceana, through whom the sword of Hate would

would pierce its object with a ten-fold death.

This thought once admitted, fixed itself firmly in the brain, the heart of Latimore.

"She dies! She dies!" exultingly exclaimed he. "Revenge, henceforth, thou art my idol! Oh thou mysterious chain of wonderful events, say, who is thy creator! Whence sprang the first link in my destiny, and what power rivetted that link to the next, until thus shackled I find myself the prisoner of circumstance—alike unable to undo the past, and to prevent the future.—Fettered to a point, I stand like a chained slave, my task decreed me. —Oh who would have believed it, that a soul like mine, partaking of all the glorious and god-like essences; full of

all seeds of good, and great, and happy, should thus in ripeness bear fruit hideous to sight, and venomous to taste.—Yet so it is, and will be. For it were self-mockery to hope for any future monument than what the execration of posterity will raise, and for the present hour, oh it is gall, is wormwood !—Yet can I not be other than I am, nor frame my mind to think on other deeds than such as vulgar souls will execrate. Well, let them—still they shall constrainedly confess, even by their execration of my triumph, that I was triumphant. Aye, there shines the ray that lights me onward. Swelling soul, thou shalt be gratified. Insulted pride, thou shalt be avenged. Hood-winked mortals, as ye are, ye Derringtons, ye Mortimers, and Elmers, come, aye come to my sight. My eyes shall welcome you, as do the basilisk's the unwary traveller, to fix you to your

your death. Yes, Fate has made you hateful, loathsome to my soul, and what I loath and hate shall I not destroy? And what I would destroy, that must I ensnare.—Quiet then, proud heart. What though I would have chosen to have measured strength with strength, no equal is there in the ranks of men stands forth to cope with me. If then an adder stings me, or a rat crawls noisome in my path, shall I not kill them? Yes, yes, my soul.—I will, I must, e'en though I stoop to crush them."

Here he dispatched Durand to summon Elmer. He informed the astonished Secretary, that having meditated thoroughly on their proposals, he had resolved to accept the proffered treaty of amity, on these conditions, that the seal of everlasting silence should be

be impressed upon the lips of Derrington, of Leverton, and Mortimer, and that the latter should, as much as possible, avoid his presence. That Oceana should be taught to attribute her late enthraldom to the machination of some desperate lover, and that the history of her birth should be softened as much as possible. "On these conditions," concluded Latimore, "the Derringtons and Latimores are once more friends, and I at least will seek occasion to do away all doubt of the sincerity of this reconciliation."

"My gracious Lord, and benefactor, how shall I express my joy?" cried Elmer. "This marvellous change from Misery to Bliss, transports me! How am I to account for such a blest transition?"

"Oh,

"Oh, waste not time, good Elmer, in wonder at the things you cannot comprehend. All is wonderful; even the mere motion of our fingers through the air. We know not by what power we thus saw atoms into halves; nor stop we to investigate. Why then marvel at the operation of the will? It is enough to know, it surely will content you to be told, that Latimore has acquired the mastery of his once ungovernable passions, and will endeavour to imitate the Christian virtues of his former enemies."

Elmer doubted—Elmer hoped;—again he doubted, and again he hoped. Such, however, was his knowledge of his patron's character, that after some further explanation for the detail of their future conduct, he quitted him with more of doubt than hope.

CHAP

## CHAP. XII.

### *False and True.*

THE restoration of Oceana to her friends, her introduction to her real father, and her consequent acquaintance with such parts of her mother's history as did not militate against that treaty of amity with Latimore, which Lord William with an effort of genuine charity signed, took place the following day. From that hour the disorder of Lord William rapidly abated, and in a few days he was perfectly restored to his usual state of health.

The

The suspicions which Oceana had entertained of the Earl of Latimore, were softened down by the shew of reconciliation between her father and that nobleman, while her gratitude to her deliverer's brother, and her affection for his sisters, completed their obliteration from a bosom ever more willing to acquit than to condemn. The new and powerful feelings too, which the public acknowledgment of Lord William created in her breast, for a time precluded almost every other. The happy father himself could neither talk or think on any other object than his Oceana.

Nor did the exquisite sense of gratitude and affection which she hourly evinced for Captain Melville, nor the repetition of the enchanting appellation, "Father," which habit made

made her frequently address to him, excite the least pain or jealousy in Lord William, but rather endeared them both the more to him, as it so pleasingly displayed the excellence of each. Whatever would please Oceana became the study of her father. The worthy Hanbury and his daughter Emma were summoned from Tenby to Salt-Hill, as the friends of Oceana. The Ladies Julia and Amelia were constantly at Salt-Hill, as friends of Oceana, and Elmer Sydney, as the son of Mortimer, and Winterton, as Chaperon to Amelia, generally accompanied them. One there was who midst the general joy seemed sad. The Marquis of Leverton, who had outstripped the zeal of all, in his efforts for the restoration of Oceana, had evinced the fewest symptoms of joy at her re-

turn;

turn; though not one among them all so strongly felt the influence of her presence on their peace as Leverton. His uncle observed his sadness, and rallied him upon it.—"Sir," replied the Marquis, "while I live I shall lament that it was Latimore, not Leverton, who risked his life for Oceana. Have you not marked her eye dwell with rapture on her preserver?" "With gratitude I have," rejoined Lord William. "Would to God I could so flatter myself," cried Leverton, "then I might hope." "I tell you," exclaimed Lord William, "that she was preserved for you alone. My happiness, my dear boy, is incomplete, unless you win your cousin. —She must, she shall be yours." Leverton sighed, and Lord Derrington smiled.

From

From that time Lord William sought opportunities of sounding the inclinations of his daughter, and received daily some additional reason to encourage the hopes of his nephew.

Oceana herself, by no very slow gradation, unfolded to the eyes of the observing friends who now surrounded her, a distinction in her esteem for the Marquis of Leverton, superior to that which she sincerely cherished for her generous deliverer, and an affection far more glowing than that which the present kind fondness of her new parent, or even the first-felt, and more deeply rooted tenderness of her adopting father had inspired in her heart.

Every one, except the Marquis himself,

himself, saw plainly that he was the object of the preference of Oceana. He still sighed to himself his regrets, that it had not been his destiny to have plunged into the briny flood, and to have borne the enviable title of Oceana's Preserver. Nor was it till the avowed declaration of Captain Latimore in favour of another object rendered all pretension to Oceana impossible, that Leverton permitted himself to renew those hopes, which the splendid achievement of his imaginary rival had for a time destroyed.

The fair maid, who had captivated the affections of the generous son of Neptune, was Emma Hanbury, the little "Welsh Beauty," as she was denominated by the party at Salt-Hill, who unanimously applaud-

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ed the good sense and correct taste of the Captain, and zealously exerted themselves to forward a union, to which, in spite of the romantic spirit of the times, no one obstacle was started. The wedding-day was therefore fixed, and the indispensable patronage of the Duchess of Derrington, through the interests of Lord William and the Marquis, was obtained for the bride elect, in spite of her humble origin, and her scanty fortune.

Her Grace of Derrington was never more happy than when her talents for *match-making* were employed. Oceana soon felt their power. The Duchess had been reconciled to her son's rejection of the treaty with Lady Julia, by his unasked proposal to join in the disposal of the estate which he had

had learnt was necessary to the continuation of his mother in the Hemisphere of Fashion, even for the remainder of the season.—This step, and the rank and fortune which recent circumstances had bestowed upon Oceana, had induced her Grace to declare herself in favour of the union of her Darling with his cousin, and the Duke's sign manual followed of course. That nobleman himself was indeed far from displeased at the alteration of affairs, which rendered a journey to Vivay unnecessary, and left him the unmolested enjoyment of English field sports.

The Duchess passed three days at Salt-Hill in compliment to Lord William and his daughter, and then the whole party removed to wind up the winter campaign of fashion at the head-

head-quarters of its sovereign, at Derrington-House.

The story of Oceana, and her approaching nuptials with the heir of the House of Derrington, became the leading topics of conversation in the fashionable world, seasoned with the usual ingredients of scandal and exaggeration, as the following characteristic epistle, from "Lady Lustre to Lady Howard," will illustrate:—

"My dearest Letitia Matilda,

"I am so excessively fatigued I can scarcely hold the pen, but my anxiety to oblige you, my dear creature, with the particulars I promised will enable me to overcome the toil of writing. I am this instant returned from Piccadilly. Derrington-House, my sweet love, is more charming, more exhilarating

rating than ever. I am quite in the horrors to think your old uncle's gout keeps you so long out of the world, especially as my present influence with the Duchess would be of such service to you. But you must make yourself as happy as you can, though I really wonder your patience is not exhausted to hear of the supreme pleasures of our world in the metropolis, while you are confined to the horrid precincts of Howard Castle. But to the purport of my letter—this new star in our hemisphere—this Oceana. She is really to be the Marchioness of Leverton, and to give a sort of sanction to the step, they have absolutely prevailed on good natured old uncle William to adopt her as his daughter and actually have trumped up a story about an Italian marriage, the Lord knows how many years ago, with a lady of great rank, who

who died, as it is pretended, at sea, where she was delivered of this Oceana, who has been under the care of old Melville, and only discovered to her real father this winter: and to give a colouring to this romantic story, they have actually prevailed upon the Prince of Beaumont, an Italian noblèman, to settle an estate upon her, which it is pretended he received through some misrepresentation of the conduct of this girl's mother; but Mr. Lance assured me, that he had heard from the first authority, that the Prince was to be indemnified in another quarter for the supposed loss of this Zoretta Estate. However, my dear Letitia, don't imagine that I believe all the reports I hear, and I am sure I should be the last in the world to propagate flying reports. But certainly there is a mystery in the story.

Lance

Lance whispered me the other evening, that it was shrewdly suspected that this Oceana was a natural daughter of Lord Latimore's, and that the Mr. Elmer I mentioned in a former letter, is her brother. Lance indeed went so far as to insinuate, that he knew the creature who was their mother. It seems she was housekeeper to a German Count.—Lance added that the strange disappearance of the girl from the Duchess's theatre, at Richmond, was a plot of Captain Latimore's, who wished to marry her; and that the Marquis, who loves her to distraction, rescued her from a private house of ill-fame; that her brother, Mr. Elmer, challenged the Captain, but the duel was prevented by Lady Julia, who doats upon Elmer. Now, my sweet girl, I do not vouch for the truth of this story, but certainly we all know that Mr. Lance does get in-

formation that nobody else can, and though I don't believe a syllable of it, what makes it very probable is, that Lord Latimore and Lord William have compromised; they are both now out of office, and the former has retired to Latimore Hall, where it is said he lives quite like a hermit. He won't let a soul come into his presence, except sometimes the Bishop; he never tastes any thing but bread and water, and lets his beard grow till they say he 's quite a fright. And still further, to corroborate what Lance says, though still I can't believe it, you must know that this Elmer has had a father made for him also—one Mortimer Sydney. Now this is too much, isn't it? but it was necessary to provide for the boy as well as the girl, to be sure, especially as he retains his situation in the new ministry, of which the Marquis is to be a member. To crown

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the whole, Lady Julia and this Elmer Sydney, as he is now called, are to be married at the same time as Oceana and the Marquis; and as a climax of *wonderment*, the Jacobin Winterton has succeeded with Lady Amelia, and they are to make the third couple at the altar. Poor Lady Mary Derrington and I are, my dear friend, *entre nous*, quite *au dersespoir*.—You know she was sighing for the attentions of Captain Latimore, who has been smitten with the pretty face of a little girl from Tenby in South Wales. Young Meriton admires Lady Mary as much, I think, as her mother does his father; but the coffers of the Derringtons cry very loudly for *Beaucoup de l' argent*, and Lady Mary will not surrender to any thing under an Honourable, or I believe George Stanley, whose eccentricities have gained so much eclat, would have been the man. Ah, my

dear Letitia, that same George Stanley it is who retards the union of my Charles and your friend. He is absolutely master of poor Charles. What do you think he made him to do the other day? He challenged him to draw a gig from Brighton to Lewes, for a wager of five hundred guineas, and actually my foolish Charles accepted it. You know he is corpulent; Stanley is strong though slender; the consequence was, that Scavenge, after having been harnessed like an horse, or rather an ass, to the gig, and after dragging it more than two miles amidst the insulting jokes of the mob, was obliged to give in, and pay the forfeit. How can I ever hope the man will listen to the voice of love, who makes such a brute of himself? I had however some hope that this defeat would have cured him of his folly, but that same mischievous devil, Stanley,

ley, has stimulated him to accept another challenge, to walk fifty miles upon the Bath road, on which he has staked a thousand guineas, and for the performance of which he is now actually in training, and both he and Stanley are *dieted at the present moment on raw meat.* Now you know, my dear Howard, though I wish my husband to be fond, yes very fond, yet I should not like my latter end to resemble that of Little Red Riding-Hood; and therefore, positively, I will not trust myself with a man who devours raw flesh!

"The Duchess has this evening informed me, that the day appointed for the nuptials of all these people is the 30th of June; that Lord Latimore has behaved very liberally on the occasion, and has signified his intention of being present at the ceremony, which

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is to be performed at Derrington Castle, in Yorkshire, which is now brilliantly decorating for the happy occasion."

Such was the mixture of truth and fiction which her ladyship committed to paper for the perusal of her friend.

It was true indeed that the Earl of Latimore had retired from office, and had resided in a recluse manner at his seat, in Derbyshire. He, however, had received visits from his sisters and brothers, and gave them reason to believe that after the marriage of Oceana, he would once more appear in the world, or would retire for ever to some part of the continent. To the marriage of his sisters, at the same time as Oceana, he long objected, but at length reluctantly assented, and even yielded to the pressing solicitation of the Duchess of

of Derrington, to spend one or two days on that occasion at Derrington Castle. His motive for this consent was hidden too deeply in his miserable breast to be discovered by any of his observers.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XIII.

### *The Wedding Day.*

IT was the latter end of the month of June, when the Duchess of Derrington, as High Priestess of Hymen, conducted eight destined victims to the altar which she had herself erected for the solemnization of their vows. The spot selected for this purpose was Derrington Castle, in the North of England, the family residence of her ancestors for a series of ages. Hither the relenting Julia accompanied the object of her first and only love,—the penitent

penitent Elmer Sydney, whose talents and virtues, purified from their stains, where such as reflected honour on the choice of Lady Julia. Her more lively sister, Amelia, in devoting herself to Winterton, was influenced perhaps in some degree by the vanity of fixing in her chains a being, whose caprice and indifference had been hitherto proverbial; while Winterton cherished for Amelia a feeling of adoration, which bound him firmly her disciple and her slave. The beautiful tyrant was fully conscious of her power; yet if occasionally she exercised it from the playful wantonness of vanity, it was far more frequently exerted for rational and benevolent purposes, and Winterton became a better and a happier man in consequence of his submission to the bonds of beauty and the sway of love. Captain Latimore and his Emma were by no means

the least happy pair in the hymeneal train of her Grace. Frank and generous in his disposition, blunt in his manners, and warm in his attachments, the noble sailor discovered in "*the little Welsh beauty*," just as much refinement of mind, and polish of manners, as he desired, together with all those more substantial excellencies of a good and unsophisticated heart, which no man more justly appreciated, or more highly prized, than the destined husband of Emma Hanbury. The disparity of their fortunes was obliterated from the notice of the world by the generous deportment of the Captain, and its recollection survived only in the breast of his Emma herself, where mingling its glow with the embers of passion, it existed in the united flame of Gratitude and Love.

In the fourth pair, who approached the

the altar of hallowed love, the Duke and Duchess of Derrington, and their excellent brother, Lord William, beheld the gratification of their most sanguine expectation of domestic happiness.—The Marquis and Oceana were certainly a matchless pair; a union of persons, minds and fortunes, so perfectly congenial, as was theirs, is a rare occurrence in any of the classes of mankind, and still more rare among that order of polished society, of which they formed a graceful part.

These were the votaries of Hymen, who on the thirtieth of June, —01. with palpitating hearts beheld the first blush of morning after a sleepless night.

There is a feeling attendant on the reflection—"To-day I am to be married," which cannot be described.—

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Under the influence of this reflection, which in various degrees operated on the minds of all, each bridegroom met his bride at an early hour, in the Oak-room, a large breakfast-parlour, in Derrington Castle, where were assembled, among the guests invited to the splendid celebration of these nuptials, all the Latimore Family, except the Earl;—the Meritons, the volatile Lady Lustre, Charles Scavenge, George Stanley, and a croud of other fashionables. Lord Latimore himself had been expected the preceding evening, but had written to his brother the Bishop, who was to perform the ceremony, that especial business prevented his arriving at the Castle before the evening of the wedding-day, which he commanded that his absence should not postpone.

The Duchess of Derrington had decreed,

creed, that the ceremony should be performed as early as ten o'clock in the forenoon, as she had devoted the remainder of the day to a rural fete, in which her numerous tenants were to mingle with their more exalted visitors.

The venerable Melville and Lord William led *their* daughter Oceana to the chapel. The excellent Mortimer Sidney, after a life of so much misery, wept tears of joy on the hand of his future daughter, as he conducted her next in the train. Colonel Latimore took the hand of his sister Amelia, and the good Hanbury himself accompanied and encouraged his Emma. The little chapel was crowded with spectators.—"So much Fashion," observed Meriton, "has not been seen together in pews since the reformation." The area was thronged with admiring rustics. The Bishop performed

formed the sacred rites with a solemn dignity, which added to the impressiveness of the scene. Of Oceana and Lady Julia, it may indeed be literally said in the elegant language of a living Poet,* whose beautiful imagery was on this occasion realized :—

"At each response the sacred rite requires,
"From her full bosom bursts the unbidden sigh;
"A strange mysterious awe the scene inspires,
"And on her lips the trembling accents die."

From the chapel to the lawn the Duke and Duchess immediately led the Marquis and Marchioness of Leverton, followed by their joyous train. Rustic mirth here held its holiday. No pains nor expence had been spared; hospitality unfolded the doors of affluence, and affability levelled the distinctions of rank. Every countenance beamed pleasure and joy.

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* The Author of "the Pleasures of Memory."

If

If there was a sad thought that day in the environs of the Castle, it floated in the shape of Earl Latimore. His image, which was repellant of mirth, at times obtruded itself on the memories of Oceana, her father and Mortimer, in spite of their efforts to forget such a monument of misery. Yet the day had nearly concluded, and the Earl had not arrived at the Castle. About eleven, however, Durand, the Earl's servant, arrived with intelligence, that his master had alighted from a post chaise, at the lodge-gate, and was walking across the park, but begged his arrival might not be announced till the morning.

His will in this instance, as in every other, was implicitly complied with, and the family retired under the persuasion that the Earl would not arrive till the next day; while he with

with the feelings of a foul fiend waited but the opportunity to perform a horrid deed of murder, which with deep artifice he had planned to destroy for ever that happiness which tortured his revengeful soul.

With this infernal purpose labouring in his breast he had arrived at the park-gate, and as the chaise turned the corner of the lodge, he was aroused from horrid reveries of murder by a scene that burst upon his view like an aerial vision of the fancy. The Castle, a noble, Gothic pile, built on a bold terrace at the extremity of the park, majestically frowned upon the vales below. The moon, which with an undazzling radiance seemed, as it were, emerging from the leafy bosom of a thick wood, rising behind the Castle, threw her silver light on the moss-covered battlements. A

gentle

gentle breeze just moved the drooping flag upon the tower; and wafted on the lazy pinions of the air indistinct tones of harmony from a full band of music. The lower front of the Castle was lighted up on the inside, and through the arched windows the nodding of plumes and the swift movement of forms, told that the mirthful guests had not yet retired from the dance.

The effect of such a scene on any heart save Latimore's would have been a swell of rapture. To him it was as the first visit of the glorious sun to the malignant gaze of Satan; and like the fallen Angel, Latimore was eager to exclaim, how much he hated what he saw. In the horrid scheme of vengeance he had fed upon, he had not calculated on the effects of such a scene as this upon his mind.

He

He had determined, that Oceana and Mortimer should perish beneath his murderous steel, and he had nerved his corrupted soul to a degree of desperation, which he believed strong enough to force the motion of his arm. The sudden exhibition of this scene inflicted on his heart excruciating tortures. He stopped the chaise, leaped out, and dispatching Durand to the Castle, darted swiftly across the meadow land into a gloomy thicket, that screened a canal. Here reigned a silence, and a partial darkness, that far better accorded with the thoughts of Latimore. He seated himself on the trunk of a felled oak, and, as if for the first moment, breathed freely.

" Cursed be their revelries! cursed be their strains of joy! Oh had my breath the force of nitre, that with a curse

a curse I could blow up yon Castle, and make one common grave—No, no, no, I wander! Where then would my revenge look for its victim? Where would the *amiable* smooth-tongued Derrington be sheltered? No—She—his child—his child must die; his friend, his minion, Mortimer, must perish;—his dazzling Leverton become a widowed bridegroom: this must be my work, and Derrington must live to see it.—When it is accomplished, then will be the triumph; then shall he hear the shout of glorious Revenge, as pointing to the bleeding bodies I thunder in his ear —I DID IT—I—thy enemy, Derrington, did this to punish the proud daring of thy silly heart, for balancing with a soul like Latimore's. Then with a laugh of joy, worth an eternity of tortures, I'll scoff his tears, his groans,

groans, his agonies, and quit the world triumphant."

A few minutes elapsed in silence.—He then started up, and walked some time upon the margin of the water.—Again he exclaimed:—

"Why lags the lazy hour thus, and why thus smoothly does it pace towards me? Come, midnight, come dressed in such robes of horror as accords with deeds of blood! Vanish, thou silver lamp of night, and be the arch of air above me more dark than chaos, ere the light sprung forth. Or, if a gleam of light appears, be it some meteor in form and colour like a blood-bathed poniard, whose point may hover o'er yon towers, the scene of my triumphant vengeance! Hither, from your prisons, whirlwinds and storms! Burst, burst the bonds that

that fetter ye, rude winds, at the four corners of the world, and chace from hence these gentle airs that wanton, as it were, in honour of this nuptial night. To battle rouse, ye elements of nature, and make this spot the theatre of your strife. Oh with what joy would my congenial spirit mingle in the destructive toil, and with what zeal perform its part in acts of desolation."

The mind of Latimore was from this moment the conquered victim of his horrible revenge. Reason, whose aid in the early part of the struggle he had scorned, now utterly abandoned him. The powers of reasoning forsook him, and during this last burst of passion which he had indulged, the ruin of a noble mind was suddenly effected.— Scarcely had he uttered the last words, when

when his brother the Bishop, who with far different feelings from the miserable Latimore, had, in company with Mortimer, been serenely contemplating the beauties of the heavens, accidentally walked into the very thicket, where Latimore stood leaning against a tree, with his eyes fixed on the moon. The Bishop knew him instantly, and in a soothing voice said —"Brother."— Gentle as was the sound, it struck on the distracted brain of Latimore like a peal of thunder. He ran, or rather leaped to a considerable distance from the spot, and then holding up a phial of poison, shook his head in mockery at the Bishop, swallowed the contents, and threw the phial away with a loud and horrid laugh. The whole incident occupied so short a space of time, that the Bishop had not recovered from the dreadful shock, nor even understood the exact nature of it,

it, when the poor maniac approached him.

"Now, my Lord Bishop, I am dead; take my body, and dispose of it as you will," said he; "a legion of soldiers should not have taken it alive. I know you dare not bury me, nor do I care about a coffin or shroud; you know Beauclair had none, and he killed nobody: I have slain two. Nay, don't start at me, murderer as I am, I can't harm you; I am dead; feel, feel how cold my poor heart is."

He drew the trembling hand of the Bishop to his breast; it struck against the handle of a poniard. He started.

"Hush, hush," cried Latimore.—"Take this, and this," placing two poniards in his hand. Then with a horrible grin continued: "That drank the

the blood of the bride ; she slept in the cedar room, in the east wing. Hush. That—that, let me kiss it again," snatching it to his lips. " That is my best friend, for that found the heart of Mortimer ; he slept in the green chamber alone. I dispatched him first. But soft, I have not seen Derrington. No, no. I must show him the blood ; give me the daggers again."

At that moment Mortimer, who had stopped to speak to the game-keeper, hearing the sound of voices, called out " My Lord ! My Lord !"

The Bishop instantly hurled the poniards into the canal, and exclaimed—" Help, help !" The game-keeper and Mortimer were quickly on the spot, but Latimore had burst from the grasp of his brother, and with incredible speed ran towards the Castle, hallooing

ing and laughing. In few words the Bishop explained, and the game-keeper pursued the wretched maniac, followed by his brother and Mortimer.

Instead of entering the Castle, however, he stopped, and looking round at his pursuers, waved his hat in the air, and then rushed up a path into the wood. It was now past midnight, and how to act without alarming the females at the Castle, embarrassed the Bishop and Mortimer extremely. The urgency of the case, however, admitted no delay, and the shock was given at once. A general cry ran through the Castle, and horror and dismay instantaneously succeeded to pleasure.

An hour elapsed ere the expiring Latimore was found and brought back to the Castle. Exhausted by the vio-

lence of his exertion, and the potent effects of the poison, the paroxysm of which took place in the wood, he now scarcely breathed. Lucid intervals of reason for a minute or two occurred, in which he attempted to speak, but in vain; he pressed the hand of the Bishop, and beckoned all others from his presence.

A solemn silence reigned throughout the Castle. The family of the Earl, Oceana, Mortimer and his Son, the Duchess and Lord William, remained together in one room, in momentary expectation of the Bishop, who in a quarter of an hour joined them, with the awful annunciation, that Latimore was no more.

Unfeigned grief swelled every bosom, while not a few, in addition to regret for the departed Earl, admitted a superstitious

superstitious horror at the recollection that this catastrophe had occurred upon a wedding day!

"Away with superstitions so degrading," said the excellent Bishop.—"Was not superstition one of the grand causes of the wreck we have witnessed? Had he, who confided so boldly on the lottery of his birth, been less the slave of superstitions, and had relied but a millionth part as much upon the Omnipotent Ruler of Events, as he did upon their fanciful divination, believe me, we should not have thus lost a brother. Away then for ever, I entreat you, with a doctrine so derogatory to the source of all good, and the essence of all love, as that which would instil a belief that He can destine or choose the evil or misery of any of his creatures. He gives to one health, and to another disease; bestows or withholds

withholds at his pleasure talents, riches, and power; but the means of happiness he benevolently places in the power of us all, by granting us the freedom of our will. To love virtue is to be happy, and if that love were to be absent from our bosoms, the attainment of supreme power, the possession of boundless wealth, unrivalled talents, and even health itself, would only serve to teach us, that all these acquisitions will not exempt the heart from Misery."

FINIS.

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